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Keeping the Faith:
The Presbyterian Press in Peace and War 1913-1919

By
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BA Honours, Wilfrid Laurier University, 2003

THESIS
Submitted to the Department of History/Faculty of Arts
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree

Wilfrid Laurier University
2005

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395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

ISBN: 0-494-09902-X

Our file *Notre référence*

ISBN: 0-494-09902-X

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Abstract

There has been very little scholarship in recent years which provides a detailed analysis of Christian support for the First World War in Canada. This work attempts to fill this gap with respect to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is a thorough analysis of the Presbyterian periodicals in war and peace between 1913 and 1919. The work is presented as a contribution to our understanding of Canada's Great War experience.

One of the few academic articles which examined Protestant support for the war was the influential article "The Methodist Church and World War I". In this article, published in the *Canadian Historical Review* in 1968, Michael Bliss argues that the Methodist Church accepted what he regards as the "paradox of fighting for peace because its leaders were misled about the nature and purposes of the war. This argument has been echoed in subsequent studies of Canadian attitude towards conflict and appears to be the most widely accepted view of church support for the First World War.

More recent general studies of Canadian attitudes during the Great War have emerged, influenced by Fritz Fischer and the belief that Germany sought war in 1914 and pursued a policy to bring Europe under German control. Recent scholarship also suggests that Allied perceptions of German behaviour in Belgium and Northern France were largely correct.

The four main periodicals of the Presbyterian Church in Canada were examined thoroughly over a period of six years and an attempt was made to read and include as many editorials, articles, letters and other contributions which reflected Presbyterian opinion about the war. The changing pattern of Presbyterian discussion demonstrated a deliberate, intelligent and continuous effort to reconcile war and Christianity. The evidence would suggest that Presbyterians understood what was at stake and why they were fighting the war. They fought based on a perception of the enemy that was largely correct and for the principles of truth, righteousness and in defence of the weak. The war was just.

Acknowledgements

My interest in this topic was greatly influenced by my reading of the works of C.S. Lewis, particularly his essay “Why I am not a Pacifist.” The approach taken in this thesis, however, is purely historical. The major body of source material used in the thesis, the periodicals published by Canadian Presbyterians, was examined at the Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in Toronto. I wish to thank the archivists Bob Anger and Kim Arnold who were extremely helpful both in assisting with source material but also by putting me in touch with other very helpful contacts. Dr. John A. Johnston, of the Presbyterian History Committee, Dr. Stuart Macdonald of Knox College in Toronto and Dr. Gordon Heath at McMaster University who all took the time to respond to my emails and phone calls and were an important resource. A special thank you to my minister, Reverend Mike Marsden, Associate Minister, Knox Presbyterian Church, Oakville for his spiritual and theological guidance, I cherish my friendship with both him and his wife Yvonne.

Everyone associated with the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies provides inspiration everyday to attain the best. Thank you to Mark Humphries, Brandey Barton and Teresa Iacobelli for offering words of encouragement, especially to Mark for all his assistance with the appendices. Thanks also to Dr. Geoff Hayes and Dr. Roger Sarty for their suggestions and support. I am especially grateful to Mike Bechthold and Andrew Iarocci whose doors are always open for guidance, support and friendship. My mentor and advisor Terry Copp, whose encouragement got me through when I felt the juggling act was just too much, whose guidance and advice were invaluable and who most of all motivates and

challenges me, I am forever indebted. Mark, Mike, Andrew, Terry and John Maker were especially kind and encouraging when everything went pear-shaped I am so blessed to have their support.

I am thankful to my parents, Don and Gail Pratley, for supporting me through my first degree and assisting with babysitting when I was at the archives. I have been especially blessed with three beautiful children who were so patient and spent far too many hours in front of the DVD so mummy could work on the computer. Amiens, Cabot and Lorne - I am all done guys – now we can go outside and play. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my husband for the tangibles and intangibles, the emotional, intellectual, spiritual support always reassured me that I was part of a team. What can one say about a man who without complaint plays the role of single parent while his wife writes history and goes to Europe on battlefield tours? Scott, I love you and am so blessed to have you in my life. Above all else I am thankful to Jesus who prays for me and strengthens me.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother Florence Pratley, whose strong belief in the traditions of her people continue to inspire my learning, to my Great-Grandfather Frederick Spratlin, MM and Bar, a great Canadian soldier and Presbyterian, and especially to all those Presbyterians who fought the good fight, kept the faith and are home.

Michelle Fowler

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Preface

A study of the ideas expressed by the Presbyterian Church in Canada on the issues of war and peace, 1913-1919 must inevitably address the questions raised in the influential article "The Methodist Church and World War I" written by Michael Bliss. The essay, which appeared in the *Canadian Historical Review* in 1968, argued that the Methodist Church turned away from the social gospel and what historian David Marshall has characterized as the "secularization of the faith"¹ because "it was taken in by atrocity stories."² The Methodist Church, according to Bliss accepted what he regards as "the paradox of fighting for peace"³ and did so because its leaders were misled about the nature and purposes of the war. The argument presented by Bliss and echoed in many subsequent studies of Canadian attitudes towards conflict⁴ was influenced by post-war revisionism about the origins and significance of the war reinforced by anti-war attitudes that developed during the 1960s.

¹ David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 4.

² Michael Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I" *The Canadian Historical Review*, XLIX, 3 September 1968, 230.

³ Bliss, 231.

⁴ Thomas Socknat's book *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) is a survey of the Canadian pacifist movement. Socknat fully agrees with Michael Bliss concerning the contradictory nature of Christian pacifist ideals. He offers a brief assessment of the Protestant reaction to the Great War and suggests that many pre-war pacifists had come full circle, with the onset of the war they regarded peace as an end rather than a means see p. 54. In order to explain this radical change in outlook by many pre-war Christian pacifists, Socknat relies heavily on the belief that traditional just war theory including justice and moderation in warfare was altered to reflect a crusading spirit which was fed by stories of German atrocities in Belgium and government-controlled war propaganda see p. 50. Thus Socknat asserts the Great War began as an idealized fight for liberty but turned into a crusade to save Christendom. The identification of Germany as evil was a part of this movement. Socknat refers to the "church" in a very general sense when he questions "should the church, for instance, automatically endorse and defend the state at war? Or is its first priority to serve as a constant reminder of the moral basis of society, even if it runs counter to official policy?" see p. 296.

More recently a new generation of historians have challenged this approach insisting with Fritz Fischer that Germany sought war in 1914 and pursued a policy designed to bring much of Europe under German control⁵, precisely the view held by most Canadians between 1914 and 1918. A similar transformation of scholarly research on war-time atrocities has also challenged the revisionist consensus. We now know that while some atrocity stories were exaggerated others were underreported. Canadians who reacted to the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the use of poison gas at Second Ypres did not need “stories of German atrocities in Belgium and government controlled propaganda”⁶ to believe the war was a crusade against evil, but recent scholarship has established that their view of overall German behaviour in Belgium and Northern France was largely correct.⁷

This thesis is presented as a contribution to our understanding of the Canadian experience during the First World War. The argument builds on the work of Jonathan Vance and Ian Miller who have challenged historians to rethink their assumptions about Canadian support for the war. Vance’s award-winning book *Death So Noble* presents

⁵ Fritz Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961)

⁶ Socknat, 50.

⁷ See Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914-1918*, (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers 1999) 180. This book describes forced labour of civilians in occupied Northern France. McPhail argues conditions in the labour camps such as lack of proper clothing in the winter, as well as meager meals, and beatings with rifle butts meant hundreds died. Also see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 2001) 234-235. Horne and Kramer discuss the Bryce Commission. The Bryce Commission led by Lord Bryce, former UK Ambassador to the United States, produced a report which investigated allegations of German atrocities in Belgium. The report had been discredited as over exaggerated and questioned because evidence from Belgian refugees was accepted at face value. Horne and Kramer establish that while the Bryce Commission exaggerated incidents of torture and rape amongst women and children (although this was never presented as factual in the report itself) the Bryce Commission report accurately portrayed German military behaviour and in some instances underestimated the number of civilian atrocities.

convincing evidence that the war generation constructed a memory of the events of 1914-1918 based on their belief that the war was just and was fought on behalf of Christian values. The title of his first chapter “A Just War” suggested a new approach to the cultural history of the war while Chapter Two “Christ in Flanders” directly addressed the connection between just war theology and popular Christian discourse. Vance may have been the first Canadian historian to attempt to understand the values of the post-war generation without imposing a presentist perspective. That Vance describes the creations of memorials which depicted the soldier as the greatest advocate of peace⁸, is in fact an affirmation that much of Canadian society, including many Christians, believed pacifism to be the wrong choice in the Great War. They understood that in order to achieve lasting peace one would have to fight for it. For many historians writing under the influence of the Vietnam war this concept may seem outdated or flatly wrong. However, Vietnam and the Cold War cannot be the lodestar for accurate and fair historical writing, one must try and understand what the citizens of the time knew and felt and Vance has brought this to Canadian historiography.

More importantly for this thesis Vance has made the distinction between the dilemmas which have been raised by Church support for war and the fundamentals of Christianity. Vance shows the importance of Christian values and beliefs such as selflessness, and sacrifice, salvation and resurrection. He makes the distinction that while the average soldier may not happily attend church parade or listen to chaplains preach about the evils of alcohol, the fundamental basis of Christianity, the life and suffering of

⁸ Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and The First World War* (Vancouver:UBC Press, 1997), 33.

Jesus Christ himself, was often not far from soldiers' minds.⁹ As Vance demonstrates, this was also reflected in the methods of commemoration and the memorializing of Canada's war dead.

Ian Miller's study of attitudes towards the war in Toronto extended this argument demonstrating that Torontonians understood the issues and developed a response that was "both informed and committed."¹⁰ Miller concludes that the secular press "placed the debate in the context of right and wrong while the religious press "viewed it as a struggle between good and evil."¹¹ Neither Vance nor Miller offer a detailed analysis of Christian support for the war, a gap which this work attempts to fill, with regard to the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The historiography of the Presbyterian Church in Canada offers little analysis of the attitudes of the church towards war. Many of the secondary sources suggest that the debate over church union far outweighed the First World War in terms of its significance for the history of the church. John Moir, who wrote the centenary history of the church, examined the church from its roots in Calvinism to the steady decline in membership as a result of changing beliefs and values in the 1960's and 1970's. In this exhaustive study only a few paragraphs were dedicated to the Great War and for the most part these paragraphs emphasized aspects of Presbyterian war service such as chaplaincy, fund-raising and the statements of the General Assembly. Moir's fleeting attention to the church in wartime is best characterized by his statement, "Regardless of Canada's

⁹ Vance, 72.

¹⁰ Ian Hugh Maclean Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 37.

¹¹ Miller 37.

preoccupation with the war, the Presbyterian church could not avoid the burning question of union.”¹²

Most analysis of the Presbyterian role in the war highlights the story of Presbyterian service. In John Thomas McNeill’s *The Presbyterian Church in Canada 1875-1925*, he emphasizes the work of Presbyterian chaplains, Presbyterian generosity in fundraising efforts and the devotion of Presbyterians as combatants and those, like Dr. John McCrae, who worked in hospital units.¹³

Among the historians who have attempted to delve deeper into the Presbyterian contribution to the First World War, two have focused on particular personalities within the church at the time. Dr. Brian J. Fraser specifically examined the contribution of a handful of Presbyterians who as liberal evangelicals saw the war as an opportunity for social reform. These “social uplifters” believed that service in a common cause would change social conditions at home. While providing an interesting perspective on the diversity of belief amongst these liberal evangelicals, on the topic of war and faith, Fraser acknowledges that his research represents only “a particular group of Christian progressives within a particular denomination clustered in a particular region of the country at a particular time in the nation’s history.”¹⁴

An even narrower focus was provided by Dr. Stuart MacDonald in his 1985 examination of the war-time sermons of the Reverend Thomas Eakin which appeared in

¹² John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, (Canada: Bryant Press, 1975) 209.

¹³ John Thomas McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada 1875-1925*, (Toronto: General Board Presbyterian Church in Canada 1925) 267-268.

¹⁴ Brian J. Fraser, *“The Social Uplifters” : Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada 1875-1915*, (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, Wilfrid Laurier University Press 1988) x.

the *Canadian Society of Church History Papers*. In the article, MacDonald attempts to understand how the Great War affected sermons delivered from the pulpit. Like so many studies of Canadian attitude towards conflict, MacDonald's article was clearly affected by the post-war revisionism about the nature and causes of the Great War. Like Bliss, MacDonald's article suggests, "Allied propaganda may have been one of the major forces which convinced Thomas Eakin that this particular war was a moral struggle and not simply a political conflict."¹⁵

The only examination of the Presbyterian press and their attitudes towards the war appeared in a 1955 Master's Thesis written by Edward A. Christie of the University of Toronto. In his broad survey titled, *The Presbyterian Church and its Official Attitude Toward Public Affairs and Social Problems 1875-1925*, Christie devotes a chapter to "The Presbyterian Church and its Attitude Towards War and Peace." Like this paper, Christie observes the differences between the periodicals, particularly the willingness of the *Presbyterian* to promote more varied opinions on faith and war. This analysis leads Christie to conclude that these differences perhaps suggest that the *Presbyterian* is more Christian in its attitude.¹⁶ Time and time again Christie determines that certain opinions are "more Christian" than others, an analysis which fails to understand the complexity of Christian thought. Christie concludes the chapter by suggesting that finally in 1922, after an editorial appeared in the *Record* which suggested that individuals should focus on

¹⁵ Stuart MacDonald, "The War-Time Sermons of the Reverend Thomas Eakin," *Canadian Society of Church History Papers*, 1985, 73. Prior to making that conclusion, MacDonald suggests that "at the outbreak of war the atrocity stories, many of which were proven after the war to have been unreliable, exaggerated or manufactured, ... were not believed but as the war continued and as vast quantities of atrocity stories began to circulate, the sheer weight of the 'evidence' gradually effected the change." 73.

¹⁶ Edward A. Christie, "The Presbyterian Church in Canada and its Official Attitude Toward Public Affairs and Social Problems 1875-1925", (MA Thesis, University of Toronto, 1955), 128.

their own heart as opposed to advising statesmen, “some real soul searching has been going on, and (the Presbyterian Church) at last has evolved an attitude toward war which appears to be more consistent with the Christian faith of a Great Canadian Church.”¹⁷

Christie construes from these observations that the “Church’s developing and changing pattern of thought regarding the conflict...was only broken by occasional words which showed the Christian spirit had not been lost entirely.”¹⁸ By contrast, the present paper attempts to put the editorials into a contextual framework and illustrates that the changing pattern of Presbyterian thought demonstrates a continuous effort and need to reconcile the Christian spirit and war.

¹⁷ Ibid., 140.

¹⁸ Christie, *Official Attitudes*, 121-122.

Introduction: The Presbyterian Church and War and Peace from the Boer War to the Great War

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a broad church encompassing a range of ideas about the theology of Protestant Christianity. Presbyterians, like other Christians, believe in eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, and in “God’s covenant relationship with the world.”¹⁹ Presbyterianism is a reformed Protestant church following the teachings of John Calvin. One of Calvin’s followers, John Knox, established Presbyterianism in his native Scotland and it then spread to Northern Ireland and North America.²⁰ The fundamental belief of Presbyterians is that all Christians have access to God. Rather than depending on the intervention of a hierarchy of clergy like the pope or a priest, Presbyterians talk to God and can be forgiven directly. Calvin believed that everyone in the church, not just clergy, was responsible for the affairs of the church,²¹ which is governed by elders elected by members of the congregation.²² Presbyterian government is made up of four tiers. The session is made up of the ruling elders and a minister. The governing body of the session, called a presbytery, is made up of one elder and one minister from each congregation and oversees a group, usually regional, of ministers and churches. Synods consist of several presbyteries and the main decision-making body is the General Assembly which meets once a year.²³ A Presbyterian

¹⁹ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, “Who We Are”,
<www.presbyterian.ca/whoweare/index.html> (2 December 2003)

²⁰ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, “Who We Are”, (2 December 2003)

²¹ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, “Who We Are”, (2 December 2003)

²² The Presbyterian Church in Canada, “Who We Are”, (2 December 2003)

²³ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, “Our Church Government”,
<www.presbyterian.ca/whoweare/government.html> (1 August 2005)

minister may help interpret secular issues such as war but it is up to individual church members to develop an understanding of such issues and reconcile their own views with their faith. As railway pioneer and prominent Canadian Presbyterian Sir Sanford Fleming stated, “The Fathers of the Reformed Churches sought to make the people actual participants in public worship, instead of mere spectators or listeners.”²⁴

The Presbyterian Church is a confessional church supported doctrinally by adherence to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This doctrinal standard established by the English Parliament in 1646,²⁵ states, “it is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: ... they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.”²⁶ Calvinist tradition holds that for a war to be just it must be fought in love and with the intention of peace. Restraint and humanity also must be evident.²⁷ The Calvinist view of peace is spiritual, “human plans for peace” are ineffective.²⁸ It is the peace an individual has with God that is the understood biblical meaning of the word.²⁹

The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was characterized by some rather unique events in its evolution that may have possibly had an impact on how the church reacted to wars in those years. Most certainly the evolution of

²⁴ John Congram, *This Presbyterian Church of Ours*, (Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books 1995), 94.

²⁵ Orthodox Presbyterian Church, “Our Confession of Faith and Catechisms”, <www.opc.org/documents/standards.html> (14 July 2004)

²⁶ Centre for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, “The Westminster Confession of Faith (with Scripture Proofs)” <www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/ch_XXIII.html> (15 July 2004)

²⁷ Donald K. McKim, “War and Peace In Calvin’s Theology” *Peace, War and God’s Justice*, ed. Thomas D. Parker and Brian J. Fraser (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House 1989), 58.

²⁸ McKim, 63.

²⁹ McKim, 63-64.

the Church was reflected in the origins of the denominational press. In order to understand the periodicals, tradition and the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada it is important to briefly examine the changes of 1875. Prior to 1875 the Canadian Presbyterian Church was not unified, but consisted of several self-governing bodies. The differences among these bodies grew from a schism that developed in the United Kingdom and was brought to Canada. The trend in Canada, however, was to unify the different bodies and mend the schisms.³⁰ A Dominion-wide union meant addressing the differing issues of doctrine and interpretation held by the various bodies. Perhaps the most important of these were the differences of expression regarding church-state relations. As historian John Moir summarizes in his centenary history of the church, *Enduring Witness*, the causes of the various bodies, including those of the majority body, the Free Church of Canada, became part of the new Presbyterian Church in Canada. These causes included “crusades against intemperance, Sabbath profanation, public and private immorality, Roman Catholic power, and all semblances of church-state connection.”³¹ The Presbyterian Church in Canada was created in 1875 in a common Scottish and Scotch-Irish tradition.³²

The union of 1875 would in only a few short years be overshadowed by debate over a union of a different kind. The early 20th century was a time of internal turmoil for the Presbyterian Church, with a substantial number of Presbyterians considering joining a broader union of churches. While for many the war was the dominating issue of 1914-1918, for Presbyterians the debate over church union was also important. This issue

³⁰ McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada 1875-1925*, 16.

³¹ Moir, 144.

³² John Moir, *Enduring Witness*, (Canada: Bryant Press 1975), 144.

certainly rivaled the war in terms of the number of pages devoted to it in the denominational periodicals. Discussion about an organic union of the Methodist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches began in the late 19th century but gained impetus at the turn of the century. While most participants supported organic union, a united Church was opposed by approximately one third of all Presbyterians.³³ Debate on union was based on wide-ranging issues of tradition, theology, mission and spirituality. John Moir suggests that by the time of the General Assembly of 1907 most congregations were able to submit specific ideas on particular matters of the church union debate.³⁴ This would suggest that Presbyterians, when war broke out in 1914, had been more exposed to the intricacies of their church theology, mission, education and other traditions than had the members of other denominations.

There were at least six periodicals read by Presbyterians during the early 20th century. These journals offered readers ample discussion of the ecclesiastical and world events of concern to Presbyterians. The *Record*, a 28-page monthly, was born in 1876 out of the amalgamation of the four official organs of the uniting bodies.³⁵ The *Record* as of 26 March 1914 was sent to 64,000 households,³⁶ a broad circulation given that there were

³³ Moir, 204-205.

³⁴ Moir, 201.

³⁵ McNeill, 197.

³⁶ *Report of the "Record" Committee* in "Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-First General Assembly", Kingston, Ontario 2-10 June 1915, Murray Printing Co., Toronto p. 274. In addition Bob Anger, Assistant Archivist for The Presbyterian Church in Canada provided the following statistics; in 1915 the regular monthly issue was 68,000 copies, 4,000 of which were distributed free as mission literature in the hopes of increasing subscriptions. In 1916 regular monthly issue was 65,000 copies, 1917: 61,250 copies, 2000-3000 distributed free, 1918: 59,000 copies, 2000 distributed free and in 1919: 59,700 copies. In 1919 the cost was raised to 35 cents from the 30 cent subscription price during the war years. He also stated that the *Presbyterian Record* was supported simply by the income it received from subscriptions.

314,832 communicants on the roll of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.³⁷ The Presbyterian viewpoint should not be underestimated. Presbyterians, according to the 1911 census, were the 2nd largest Protestant denomination, at 15.5% of the total population. Most resided in Ontario.³⁸ *The Record* it should be noted, “was the only Presbyterian publication that was the official voice of the General Assembly with an editor appointed by the assembly and responsible to it.”³⁹ Throughout the war years Dr. Ephraim Scott served as editor and his regular editorials provide a clear exposition of quasi-official church views.

In addition to the official organ of the church there were independent papers, characterized by Dr. Brian J. Fraser as “more creative and extensive in their coverage of the affairs of the church and the nation”⁴⁰ than *The Record*. *The Presbyterian Witness*, a weekly published in Halifax, Nova Scotia, included editorials as well as stories republished from the British Presbyterian press. The manner in which the news was reported as well as the particular editorials selected for publication provide a good indication of Presbyterian attitudes in the Maritime provinces, as compared to the Montreal-based *Record*. *The Presbyterian* and *The Westminster*, both produced by the same Toronto company were also significant publications.⁴¹ The first was a weekly

³⁷ *Statistics Summary by Synods to December 31, 1913*, “Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-First General Assembly” 629.

³⁸ *5th Census of Canada, Vol II*, (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, King’s Printer 1913) In 1911 the total population of Canada was 7, 206, 643 of that number 15.5% or 1,115,324 were identified as Presbyterians. The breakdown by province or territory was; Alberta 66,351, British Columbia, 82,125, Manitoba 103,621, New Brunswick 39,207, Nova Scotia 109,560, Ontario 524,603, PEI 27,509, Quebec 64,125, Saskatchewan 96,564, Yukon, 1,603 and Northwest Territories 56.

³⁹ Clifford, N. Keith, *Resistance to Church Union in Canada*, (Vancouver : UBC Press, 1985) 29.

⁴⁰ Fraser, “*The Social Uplifters*”, 66.

⁴¹ Brian Fraser, “*The Social Uplifters*”, 66. Fraser suggests that these publications “offered the church a wide range of reporting and commentary on religious and secular affairs in keeping with

which positioned itself as a more socially progressive paper than the *Record*, though it had a much smaller circulation⁴² and the second, a monthly magazine. Eventually war-time conditions made it necessary for these two publications to merge in January 1917.⁴³ The *Globe* was also studied to put the writings of the denominational press into context. It should be noted that the Toronto *Globe* had evolved from the *Banner*, a paper started by George Brown in 1843 to promote Free Church opinion.⁴⁴ In January 1903 the former editor of the *Westminster* Mr. James MacDonald became the editor of the *Globe*⁴⁵ a position he held through the early stages of the war until his denunciation of “European” militarism in favour of North American pacifism led to controversy and his resignation in late 1915.⁴⁶

The Presbyterian Church in Canada was first faced with the challenge of reconciling war and faith at the time of the Boer War. The Church, as represented by its periodicals, was supportive of the country’s participation in the Boer War. For many Presbyterians the war was considered just in the context of a belief in the providential nature of the British Empire. Gordon L. Heath, who examined the Protestant denominational press during the Boer War, suggests that the Canadian churches viewed themselves as nation-builders, and that the nation-building would be brought to fruition

the Free Church tradition of the lordship of Christ over all human affairs.” Robert Haddow became the editor of the Westminster publications in 1903 replacing his former Knox College classmate James A. MacDonald.

⁴² Dr. John Johnston, telephone interview by author, August 2004.

⁴³ McNeill, 200.

⁴⁴ McNeill, 199.

⁴⁵ McNeill, 200.

⁴⁶ Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada 1875-1915*, (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, Wilfrid Laurier University Press 1988) 157.

within the Empire. He concludes, “Any threat to the empire, therefore, was not only a threat to peace and civilization worldwide, but also a direct threat to Canada.”⁴⁷ Lord Curzon, former Viceroy of India and a future member of Lloyd George’s Great War cabinet provided an understanding of the context of the times when he said, “the British Empire is under Providence the greatest instrument for good the world has seen.”⁴⁸ Church leaders believed that the world had the British Empire to thank for law, order, governance, free movement of goods, capital and labour, an active policy for the abolition of slavery, and the overall idea of liberty.⁴⁹

Heath suggests that the Presbyterians, like those of other Protestant denominations, believed that the fate of the Empire was tied up in events in South Africa. He notes that the *Presbyterian Record* stated in January 1900 that the war had been fought for “the integrity of the Empire, and through that for the best interests and peace of the world.”⁵⁰ Heath also points out that the Protestant churches believed the war to be just in the Christian tradition. Heath notes that the principles of just war theory are not mentioned in the press, rather, the idea of justice was based on Presbyterian and Christian tradition.

During the Boer War the Presbyterian press, like other Protestant journals, deliberately and publicly supported a war effort from a conviction that an examination of

⁴⁷ Gordon L. Heath, “A War With A Silver Lining: Canadian Protestant Churches and the South African War, 1899-1902” (Ph.D. Diss., Knox College, University of St. Michael’s College 2004), 171.

⁴⁸ as quoted in Neill Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002) xxiii.

⁴⁹ Ferguson, xxiv-xxv.

⁵⁰ As quoted in Heath, 174-175, “Peace Declaration,” *Westminster*, 7 June 1902 693 and “Another New Year,” *Presbyterian Record*, January 1900, 1-2.

the evidence clearly proved that Britain was right and the Boers wrong. The belief that the maintenance of the British Empire was the key to the future of such a young nation as Canada heavily influenced the support of the Presbyterian press for the Boer War, but church leaders felt compelled to justify their support for the war in terms of just war traditions. In the words of the Presbyterian journal, *The Westminster*:

When the war broke out *The Westminster* was caught, like the average observer everywhere, unprepared to pronounce with confidence an opinion on the merits of the issue so sharply raised by the Boer ultimatum....As time went on, however, more light was shed on the political as well as the military situation, and it became reasonably clear to us that the British were substantially right and the Boers substantially wrong.⁵¹

Between 1902 and 1914 the Presbyterian Church promoted the peaceful resolution of conflict but most Presbyterian editors and contributors understood peace in the context of the preservation of the Empire for the well-being of Canada. However, one group of Presbyterians, the Westminster, British Columbia Presbytery, promoted a pacifist agenda.

In January 1913 the Westminster Presbytery transmitted a "Peace Manifesto" to Prime Minister Robert Borden, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the Liberal opposition, and the other Presbyteries of the Church in Canada.⁵² The manifesto questioned the necessity of war and set out a three step procedure to lessen the opportunity for war. The presbytery concluded that Great Britain should exhaust every possibility to avoid war, but added that if war should occur Canada should be prepared to stand with the Empire.⁵³

⁵¹ For Full quote see Heath 53. Quoting "The Westminster and the War," *Westminster*, (Toronto: 9 February 1901), 173.

⁵² "Presbyterians and World Peace", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 30 January 1913)

⁵³ "Presbyterians and World Peace", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto, 30 January 1913)

The Reverend Dr. Brian J. Fraser described this pacifistic social movement.⁵⁴ According to Fraser the manifesto was the “clearest expression of liberal Presbyterian pacifism” and was based on the works of international peace activists.⁵⁵ It called for cooperation with the United States to find harmony among European nations and advocated the establishment of an international court for the settlement of disputes “by reason and righteousness, and not by blind passion and brute force.”⁵⁶ The manifesto continued: “who should lead in a movement against war, if not the Church? If the church has nothing to say against murder, if she has no fight to wage against the powers of hell, her occupation is gone and her doom is sealed.”⁵⁷ The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church passed a resolution which suggested the manifesto was in accordance with the Assembly’s own sentiments.⁵⁸ As well, the manifesto was published in the *Globe* at the insistence of the paper’s Presbyterian managing editor James A. MacDonald, a liberal pacifist.

The reaction to the Manifesto appears to have been mixed. The *Presbyterian* provided the only example of open debate on the document and the context in which it was written. While militarism and peace movements were all being discussed and debated in the *Presbyterian* the other periodicals of the denomination were surprisingly silent on the same issues. The *Witness* occasionally printed a relevant article or editorial,

⁵⁴ Brian J. Fraser, “Peacemaking Among Presbyterians in Canada: 1900-1945”, *Peace, War and God’s Justice*, ed. Thomas D. Parker and Brian J. Fraser (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House 1989), 58.

⁵⁵ Fraser *Peace, War and God’s Justice*, 127.

⁵⁶ Fraser *Peace, War and God’s Justice*, 127.

⁵⁷ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Peace Manifesto”, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto, 30 January 1913), 132.

⁵⁸ Robert Haddow (ed.), “The Church and Peace”, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto, 19 June 1913), 777.

but a review of the *Record* for the year revealed no articles or editorials aimed at the debate over Canada's naval role nor did it discuss "The Peace Manifesto."

In February 1913 J.F. McCurdy, a Presbyterian who taught at University College, University of Toronto suggested in the *Presbyterian* that it was about time an ecclesiastical body broke the rule and concerned itself with the affairs of the state.⁵⁹ Although the *Presbyterian* was the paper of the progressive or liberal pacifist wing of the church the manifesto was not without its critics among readers. On 10 April 1913 MacDougall Hay, a prominent Presbyterian minister in Elora, Ontario suggested that the manifesto was "foolish pacific[sic] propoganda."⁶⁰ He believed Britain and the Empire to be morally right, in the context of the naval race and that these morals should be upheld by the manhood of the nation and not depend on a court which would not necessarily be infallible in judgment.⁶¹ A second correspondent, Lieutenant-Colonel J.B. Mitchell, stated it was, "the most wishy-washy, meaningless conglomeration of words without practical ideas that has been drawn up for some time."⁶²

According to historian Brian Fraser, the Peace Manifesto drew national attention and was well received.⁶³ Although very little was found in the other periodicals with reference to the Peace Manifesto, the *Witness* in March 1913 did include both a poem and

⁵⁹ J.F. McCurdy, "The Westminster Peace Declaration", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto, 6 February 1913) 168.

⁶⁰ MacDougall Hay "Justifiable War", Letter to the editor of *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 10 April 1913).

⁶¹ MacDougall Hay "Justifiable War", Letter to the editor of *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 10 April 1913).

⁶² Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 157.

⁶³ Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 157.

article promoting peace over war. The Reverend F.W. Murray put the expenditures of the church into a similar framework as naval expenditures,

The Church at an expenditure of less than two cents per day for each individual trained, is handling an organization that is at this hour preparing considerably over a million persons to assist in promoting the general peace and prosperity of the world, and is by these million persons sending forth an influence that is to the uttermost parts of the earth hastening on the time when no war or battle's sound shall be heard the world around.⁶⁴

Other perspectives, however, were also outlined in the *Witness* in the same month. J.W. MacMillan wrote, after returning from a military conference:

The soldier is not the war monger. He is more apt to be the war victim. Soldiering today is not swash buckling or piracy. It is little more than an extra hazardous branch of engineering. The foes of peace are to be found in counting-houses and editorial chairs rather than in camps or barracks.⁶⁵

The affairs of the nation in 1913 were focused primarily on the Canadian naval debate between a Conservative government proposal to provide a \$35 million contribution to Britain for more Dreadnoughts and the Liberal policy of further developing the enlarged Canadian navy that the Liberals had established in 1910. The *Presbyterian* disagreed with both sides, arguing in favor of international peace and disarmament.⁶⁶ Again this issue was hotly debated in the *Presbyterian*, briefly mentioned in the *Witness* and not mentioned at all in the *Record*. One possible explanation is that the *Record* dealt with church matters and every home that had a copy of the *Record* would most likely also have had a copy of *The Globe*⁶⁷ for national and international affairs. In

⁶⁴ Reverend F.W. Murray, "War or Peace?" *Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 15 March 1913) 2.

⁶⁵ J.W. MacMillan, "The Military Conference", *Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: March 1913) 6.

⁶⁶ Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 158.

⁶⁷ Dr. John A. Johnston, Committee on History, Presbyterian Church in Canada, telephone conversation with the author 12 July 2004

fact the only *Record* article this author was able to find concerning Germany at all was in the October 1913 edition which announced that the Kaiser had joined the ranks of teetotalers. Ironically, given the tensions created by the naval build up in both Britain and Germany, the *Record* noted; “While he was swearing in the naval recruits at Wilhelmshaven recently, the Emperor took occasion to deliver a lecture on temperance.”⁶⁸

In the matter of the naval debate, letters to the editor of the *Presbyterian* offer some indication of the varied opinions that its readers considered. Christopher West wrote:

Let us vote the thirty-five millions but apply the money to missions of international good will – a purpose which will win the approbation of sane men all the world over.⁶⁹

In the same edition Frederic Robson of Toronto suggested:

Your article on “Moral Elements in the Naval Question” will emphasize to non-Canadian readers the already widespread impression that we are willing to shirk our duty of self-defence so long as John Bull [UK] is willing to play protector. What you are so glad to call the “moral elements” of the naval question are to my mind only the glaring inconsistencies which make practical statesmen sometimes impatient with Christian theorists.⁷⁰

The letters to the editor in fact reveal a division of opinion on Canada’s role in the Empire. As early as 1913 rationalization of support for Britain in a potential war was evident even amongst readers of the *Presbyterian*;

⁶⁸ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “Emperer William an Abstainer”, *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: October 1913), 447.

⁶⁹ Christopher West, “Await the Hague Conference-Proposal for a Suspension of the Navy Bill”, Letter to the Editor, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 24 April 1913).

⁷⁰ Frederic Robson, “Await the Hague Conference-Proposal for a Suspension of the Navy Bill”, Letter to the Editor, *The Presbyterian*, 24 April 1913

The fate of Canada is irrevocably bound up with that of the Empire. Were the empire to cease to be there would be no more a Canadian land or a Canadian people. Such a defenceless land, such a defenceless people would be too rich a plum.⁷¹

William Mayhew of Toronto, by contrast, wrote:

I am a Briton through and through, but as I see my duty as a Christian citizen in this country I ought to do all in my power to keep Canada out of the tangles that the old land is in with nations far from us in distance and in ideals.⁷²

Robert Dewar of Wawanesa, Manitoba took a very different view:

You talk as if the interests of our Canada and motherland were at variance... There is perhaps a more fundamental moral question that you have overlooked, namely if you grant at all that this naval force is necessary and that we are protected thereby, it may be incumbent upon us to pay our fair share now.⁷³

Letters such as these dominated the editorial pages of the *Presbyterian* in 1913-14. The periodical appeared to be fair in its airing of views, and the debate was notably articulate.

A *Witness* editorial, in May 1913 advocated the promotion of peace by all means and the denunciation of militarism:

It is surely time that the nations of Europe were calling for a halt in naval and military expansion and perhaps one of the best ways to promote universal peace is by giving wide publicity, to the enormous and ever increasing burdens of modern armies and navies.⁷⁴

⁷¹ J. M. Wallace, "The Peace Manifesto", Letter to the Editor in *The Presbyterian*, (Halifax, Nova Scotia: 27 March 1913).

⁷² William Mayhew, "Moral Elements in the Naval Question", Letter to the Editor, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 1 May 1913).

⁷³ Robert Dewar, "Moral Elements in the Naval Question", Letter to the Editor, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 1 May 1913).

⁷⁴ Dr. George S. Carson (ed.), "Growth of European War Budgets", *Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax, Nova Scotia, 3 May 1913).

Again, the Letters to the Editor of the *Presbyterian* reveal division amongst Presbyterians on the use of force. MacDougall Hay, addressed the particular issue of an international court in a letter published 10 August 1913:

Every day in our land questions of right are settled by an appeal to force. The whole judicial system of the country would be a purposeless pantomime if there were not implicit in every judicial decision the menace of coercion....

I justify the use of force to achieve and maintain moral ends. I consider the solidarity of the British Empire, and the autonomy of Canada as a part of the empire, to be moral ends of the most moral sort. I regard those moral ends as chiefly protected by the manhood of the empire, and would not hand them over to the tutelage of any court. I am anxious for my country when I remember how small a matter may precipitate war, and when I consider that one single battle, one petty accident, one mere mistake, one well-aimed shell may decide that hereafter we, a free people in a free land, are to give our homage and our hands to Czar or Kaiser.⁷⁵

This was part of a highly intelligent debate about the morality of war. A.W. Shepherd's reply to Hay is a typical example of this debate:

Mr. Hay says further, "Every day in our land questions of right are settled by an appeal to force." This is an unintentional misstatement which he afterwards makes clear. The decision of a court of justice is according to the statute book and the judge's or jury's interpretation of justice. It is the decision that is enforced by legal penalties, either explicit or implicit. But this is different from war. If there is dissatisfaction in a civil case matters cannot be put right by a pugilistic encounter or a duel, or with the old fashioned shillalah. Such an exhibition would be more than a pantomime. But it would only decide who was the stronger, or the more expert. It is exactly the same with war – 'Tis better to endure the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of.'⁷⁶

⁷⁵ MacDougal Hay, "Justifiable War", Letter to the Editor in the *Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 10 April 1913).

⁷⁶ A.W. Shepherd, "Justifiable War", Letter to the Editor in the *Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 24 April 1913).

Arthur T. Guttery, writing in the 15 January 1914 edition of the *Presbyterian* took an even stronger line:

To say that such a war is inevitable is blasphemous folly. It is a direct impeachment of the good government of God, and regards with contempt that unity of the race that is the inspiration and warrant of all missionary labor. It would prolong the dominion of the sword, and postpone the reign of the Divine word. No such war can be inevitable if men will only show to each other in their national relations that forbearance and good will which are the first precepts of the Christian faith.⁷⁷

Yet at this same time criticism in the journal of excessive military preparation by Australia and Britain drew a sharp rejoinder:

Your position, as taken on page 501 in regard to the universal military training of the youth of Australia is extreme, to say the least. Australia is preparing to defend herself and not for aggressive warfare you suggest. If she feels that her security, which you admit a nation has a right to seek, demands that every able-bodied man should know how to shoot straight, and walk straight, and learn obedience, has she not as much right to demand it as she has to require that every person, in order that the best interests of the Commonwealth may be met, shall be able to speak and write the English language? It is a case of where the wishes of the individual must be subservient to the interests of the State.

On page 533 you admit that a nation has the right to seek her security, but not supremacy. Now Britain seeks supremacy, but only because for her, her security lies only in her supremacy. If we are not supreme at sea, how are we going to keep our trade routes?⁷⁸

In the months leading up to the outbreak of the First World War many Presbyterians, prompted by the issuance of the Peace Manifesto, openly debated the role of their country in Imperial military affairs, the growth of militarism in general and the role of the church in promoting peace. The editorials and letters to the editor provide

⁷⁷ Arthur T. Guttery, "War and Missions", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 15 January 1914).

⁷⁸ Dr. Robert Haddow (ed.), "Canada's Naval Force", Letter to the Editor in the *Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 8 January 1914).

ample evidence that not all Presbyterians believed in the liberal pacifist approach. Despite the attention Fraser claimed the Peace Manifesto received, it was not covered in all the press outlets of the denomination. It was not even overwhelmingly supported in the paper that was the most open to pacifist ideas. Discussions on these topics were limited to two periodicals with the socially progressive *Presbyterian* presenting the most open debate. With few editorials on the subject of militarism and pacifism in the more mainstream publications, it is difficult to determine where the average Presbyterian stood on these issues. It is clear however that those who were involved in the debate participated at a high intellectual level. The discussions of 1913-14, nevertheless, provide some indication of the extent to which some Presbyterians saw the Empire as the key to peace and liberty worldwide. Letters to the editor tell us that there was division on this issue but it was only apparent in one small segment of the Presbyterian community. Dr. Brian J. Fraser's history tells us that even these progressives, part of a movement called the social gospel which emphasized Christian ethics and principles as a way of bringing about change to the social order, agreed in their Peace Manifesto "to stand or fall with the Empire."⁷⁹

At the dawn of the Great War, examination of the Presbyterian press reveals something approaching consensus on a traditional belief in just cause and means, a strong Canada within the Empire, some contemplation over the extent of church-state connections and importantly, a desire for peace. The means to this peace was under debate. There was, however, little debate over whether or not war might be a necessary

⁷⁹ Fraser *The Social Uplifters*, 157.

evil in response to German militarism. That possibility was always understood.⁸⁰ These divisions over war and peace and military and naval expenditures also reveal that Presbyterian opinion was not unlike that of most English Canadians who “thought they understood what was at stake.”⁸¹

⁸⁰ Fraser *The Social Uplifters*, 157.

⁸¹ Terry Copp, “The Military Effort 1914-1918”, *Canada and the First World War: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown*, ed. David MacKenzie, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 36.

Chapter One: A Just War August 1914 - December 1915

On 1 August 1914, as Europe descended into war, Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden telegraphed the British government to declare “a common resolve to put forth every effort...to ensure the integrity and maintain the honour of the Empire.” Prime Minister Borden also offered “a considerable force for service abroad.”⁸²

The government’s actions were supported by the leader of the opposition, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, labour and industrial spokesmen, church publications including the anti-militarist Methodist *Christian Guardian*, and the radical voice of western farmers, *The Grain Growers Guide*. Henri Bourassa, the leading critic of Canada’s imperial ties, also endorsed the war effort. He insisted that while Canada had no moral or constitutional obligation to Great Britain, the country’s duty as an Anglo-French nation was clear.⁸³ The Presbyterian press offered immediate support of the war effort and presented a quasi-official position on the front page of the *Record* in early September. Dr. Ephraim Scott described the great question as being a choice between peace at all costs and the idea of fighting for peace:

The great question is whether a considerable part of the human race is to be crushed under the Power of a cruel and inhuman military despotism; or whether the arm of the oppressor shall be broken, and the world come out more fully than ever before into the larger freedom, hoped and promised long, with sword and spear reforged to plough and pruning hook.⁸⁴

Dr. Scott, in his long September 1914 editorial discussed the duty of all Presbyterians on the home front to pray, to be compassionate to those left behind and to

⁸² G.W. Nicholson, *The Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1962), 5-6.

⁸³ Terry Copp and Terry Tait, *The Canadian Response to War 1912-1917*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) 9-14.

⁸⁴ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “The War and Duty’s Call”, in *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September 1914) 385.

“guard against unnecessary personal indulgence.”⁸⁵ Dr. Scott referred to the soldiers as “bearing their cross of toil and suffering for a redemption of the race; and that her cause is in full harmony with that greater Redemption, once purchased by Cross and suffering and death for men.”⁸⁶ In this opening editorial the editor of the *Record* had defended the war as just and acceptable within the teachings of Christianity. Arguing against those who saw the war as a failure of modern civilization and Christianity, Dr. Scott suggested that the war was not about the failure of Christianity but rather “an outbreak of remaining diabolic barbarism”⁸⁷, which would be destroyed by the great powers “arrayed against it.”⁸⁸ The following month he came out with the bold statement, “war is never wrong when it is war against wrong.”⁸⁹ Presbyterians were being counseled that the war was just and in keeping with the spirit of Christianity when it was a war directed at those who were perpetrating wrong.

Dr. Scott’s editorial reveals that right at the onset of war the main Presbyterian organ had established that there was a clear oppressor. German militarism was cruel and inhumane and had to be stopped in order for peace and freedom to prevail. The evidence also suggests that as early as 1914 the Presbyterian press emphasized fundamental Christian ideas such as suffering and redemption.

The idea of fighting for peace was a vital and pressing concept faced by Presbyterians at the dawn of the Great War. British church leaders published a statement

⁸⁵ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “The War and Duty’s Call”, in *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September 1914) 386.

⁸⁶ Dr. Ephraim Scott, “The War and Duty’s Call”, 387.

⁸⁷ Dr. Ephraim Scott, “The War and Duty’s Call”, 388.

⁸⁸ Dr. Ephraim Scott, “The War and Duty’s Call”, 388.

⁸⁹ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “Fight and Pray” in *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: October 1914), 433.

concerning the causes of the war in response to an earlier declaration made by the Christian churches of Germany. (see Appendix) These statements, printed in the 22 October 1914 edition of the *Presbyterian*, helped Canadian Presbyterians to clarify their ideas. The statement outlined the new position adopted by the social gospel wing of the church.

But there must be no mistake about our own position. Eagerly desirous of peace, foremost to the best of our power in furthering it, keen especially to promote the close fellowship of Germany and England, we have nevertheless been driven to declare that, dear to us as peace is, the principles of truth and honor are yet more dear. To have acted otherwise...would have meant...a refusal of our responsibilities to the maintenance of the public law of Europe. We have taken our stand for international good faith.⁹⁰

In a similar vein the denominational papers, in the autumn of 1914, attempted to put the war and the issues that arose from it in a Christian context. This meant examining everything from the consequences of fighting another Christian country to understanding the role of church and state, clarifying the definition of evil, understanding which side God was on and determining if and how German militarism was a threat to Christianity.

The periodical of the socially progressive leaders of the denomination, the *Presbyterian* supported the cause but with a call for reflection and restraint. The lead editorial in the 13 August 1914 edition suggests,

... we are prepared gladly to make whatever sacrifice may be necessary for British honor and British freedom. Now while the tide of patriotism runs high it is the more necessary to guard our thoughts and feelings lest we be betrayed into actions or sentiments unworthy of Christian men...It may well be that there is guilt upon us all.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Robert Haddow (ed.), "Churchman Pro and Con", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 22 October 1914) 370.

⁹¹ Robert Haddow (ed.), "In Time of War" in *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 13 August 1914), 1.

According to Dr. Brian Fraser, the socially progressive Presbyterians did not question the righteousness of the conflict or support for Britain at the outbreak of the war. They only differed in how they felt the war affected the Christian conscience.⁹² *The Presbyterian* appeared to be the first to use the term “evil” in the opening days of the war. The term specifically referred to the German military caste but cautioned Presbyterians against anti-German sentiment.

They have been led by evil counselors, and are the victims of a military system in which all the nations of Europe are involved. Hence we are at war with them and we hope for victory. But our prayer should be that the time may speedily come when Germans and Britons will stand together, rivals only in the arts of peace and in every movement for the betterment of humanity.⁹³

Those Presbyterians who shared a belief in the social gospel supported the war effort prior to the atrocity stories of 1915. They believed that the British Empire meant security and freedom for Canadians, while cautioning Presbyterian readers not to be carried away by popular sentiments of the time. The Presbyterian press guarded against the unChristian action of being swept up by either pacifist or patriotic zeal. The difficulty of fighting a fellow Christian nation was discussed in the September 1914 edition of the *Presbyterian*:

For some of the official acts of the German army it is impossible to find adequate excuse. The burning of Louvain, the dropping of bombs among the sleeping inhabitants of Antwerp, without warning or opportunity for non-combatants to take refuge.... But we must not allow ourselves to be driven by the one-sided stories we read to the conclusion that the Germans are a barbarous and unfeeling people.... Even in those armies for whose defeat our brothers are fighting and we are praying, there are thousands who in all the personal relations of life are at least as gentle-hearted as ourselves.... That there are among the ranks of those we call ‘the enemy’

⁹² Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 160.

⁹³ Robert Haddow (ed.), “In Time of War”, 1.

many who are really our brethren in Christ Jesus. How strange when those who have met as enemies upon the battlefield meet again, among the great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples and tongues, before the throne of God!⁹⁴

The editorial made the distinction between the German people and “official” acts. While it was acknowledged that many Germans were Christian there was an effort made by the editorial to demonstrate the bad influence of the government and military caste on the German people.

Despite the recognition that many Germans were Christian, there was concern expressed by the periodicals that the autocratic nature of the military caste reflected an intention to place the state above God. It became apparent that the Presbyterian press saw German militarism as a threat to Christianity. Concern about the rise of nationalist teachings and the apparent neglect on the part of German churches to address this trend was evident in the response by British church leaders to the statement on the origins of the war issued by the Christian Churches of Germany. (*The Presbyterian*, 22 October 1914 see Appendix.) The German Christian leaders stated, “with the deepest conviction we must attribute it (the war) to those who have long secretly and cunningly been spinning a web of conspiracy against Germany, which now they have flung over us in order to strangle us herein.”⁹⁵ The response of British church leaders not only showed their shock at the German Christian community’s lack of understanding surrounding the causes of the war, they also expressed confusion over why the German Christian leaders

⁹⁴ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Thinking the Best” in *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 10 September 1914)

⁹⁵ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Churchmen Pro and Con”, 22 October 1914, 368. (see Appendix A)

failed to mention the growing influence of secularist thinking, particularly Treitschke and Bernhardi,⁹⁶ amongst the German population.

When we turn to the generalities which the document contains about German thought and polity and plans, we seek in vain for any reference to the teaching of such writers as Treitschke and Bernhardi. Does it mean that those who have signed the German Appeal regard those leaders and teachers as negligible, or that their own opposition to what those widely read books contain is so well known as to need no assertion? We cannot tell. But the facts of the hour, as set forth in the summary which we have given above, correspond so clearly with what is inculcated and driven home in those writings that we at least find it impossible to separate the one from the other.⁹⁷

The publication of this statement by a Canadian Presbyterian periodical would suggest that editors understood that the ability for Christianity to flourish in Germany was severely hampered by notions of German superiority. This German nationalism, so evident by the actions of the German government strongly, reflected the increasingly popular teachings of Treitschke and Bernhardi. In trying to understand how it came to be that Canadians were fighting a Christian enemy, the Presbyterian press focused on the rise of German militarism including the predominance of the military caste in the German government. A parallel paper examining the reactions of the Lutheran or Catholic churches during the First World War might possibly provide another view, but for Presbyterians, fighting their Christian brethren was a matter of deep concern and this conflict had to be reconciled. The Presbyterian periodicals at this time appeared to hope that the German churches were kept in the dark and did not have knowledge of the events

⁹⁶ Heinrich von Treitschke 1834-1896, official historian of the Prussian state was a fervent German nationalist and anti-Semite. General Friedrich von Bernhardi, 1849-1930 was the author of *Germany and the Next War* which advocated expansionism for Germany. His phrase “world power or decline” was much quoted.

⁹⁷ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Churchmen Pro and Con”, 22 October 1914, 368. (see Appendix A)

surrounding the outbreak of the war. Presbyterian contributors knew that for Christians the defence of the weak was paramount and therefore the violation of Belgium was an unspeakable offense.

The facts thus recited are in our belief incontestable. We can only suppose, incredible as it seems, that those honorable and gifted men who signed the German Appeal were unaware of the obligations by which we were bound, and also of the story of the negotiations. A violation of such promises on our part would have been an act of basest perfidy.⁹⁸

For Presbyterian contributors, the autocratic and secular nature of the German government was a roadblock to the free will of the German people and the expression of their Christian values.

In November 1914, Charles W. Gordon, a notable leader “in articulating and implementing a social Christianity with the denomination,”⁹⁹ contributed an article to the *Presbyterian* titled “Canada’s Duty”. Gordon, famous throughout the British Empire as the author Ralph Connor, could find no excuses for the Prussian military caste, and he was forthright in his explanation of why war was the only answer to German militarism.

Upon this issue Germany stakes her existence, that Europe may be Germanized and a World Empire established greater than the world has ever seen, with colonies on every sea, built upon highly scienced brute force that knows no law but that of might and derides the Christian virtues as contemptible and utterly unworthy of superman. For this enterprise the Kaiser believes himself God anointed and God appointed. With him to-day stand the haughty aristocracy of Prussia and all the war caste of Germany, and behind them, united in a mad and deluded enthusiasm, stand as yet the German people to a man. Victory for the Allies, therefore, means the dethronement of the Kaiser and his military brood, the annihilation of the war caste and the smashing of the war machine. No peace is possible. Two sets of principles are locked in death grips – Force as an empire builder against the Will of a free people.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Churchmen Pro and Con”, 22 October 1914, 370. (see Appendix A)

⁹⁹ Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, x.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Canada’s Duty”, 12 November 1914, 438.

Even the “Children’s Record,” a regular feature of the *Record*, emphasized the righteousness of the conflict, the need to serve and the nature of the enemy:

Remember that the war is especially for you, that you may have, when you grow up, a free happy world to live in. If the German army were to win there would not be freedom. The German military system is cruel and brutal and the world would not be a good place to live in under its control, and brave men are fighting to-day to preserve for you and for the world the liberties that are so dear. ... Remember that the highest ideal of life is not being served but by giving service.¹⁰¹

The German army and the system it represented was what posed a threat to Canadian and British freedoms. British liberty reflected Christian values; German power did not.

Although the belief was strong that the British Empire best represented a Christian value system, Presbyterian commentators cautioned not to presume that God was on their side. Instead commentators emphasized the need to be on the side of God, a subtle but important distinction. Being on the side of God represented a belief that the Allies were on the side of right, believing God was on the Allied side presumed that one knew God’s plan for the world. To this end commentators suggested the Allies must practice humility in contrast to the Kaiser’s arrogance. On 3 September 1914 the editorial on the opening pages of the *Presbyterian* read:

The Empire of Germany has repeatedly expressed his confidence that the cause for which he is fighting in the present war is the cause of Heaven, and has been prompt to ascribe the successes which his soldiers have won to the favor of God...For a nation, as for an individual, only one thing really matters – that is to be on the side of God. Happy are they who in defeat, can say, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Happy are they

¹⁰¹ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “The Children’s Record”, *The Presbyterian Record*, (Toronto: November 1914)

who, when victorious, are kept from arrogance through faith in God and who realize that they have been allowed to conquer only that they may the more effectually serve.¹⁰²

No matter whether German or British, an individual's faith in God and their intention to do right by God should be the ultimate belief. No side should believe that they understood God's plan for the destiny of the world.

In September 1914, a prayer printed in the *Presbyterian* by Reverend T.B. McCorkindale of Lakefield, Ontario asked "if it be Thy will, (grant) victory to our arms."¹⁰³ This statement recognized that there is a chance that it is not God's will that the allies achieve victory, rather, there was a hope that the allies were doing right by God. This prayer was printed in the periodical as a response to several requests for a form of prayer "that could be used in our church services in these days of anxiety and gloom."¹⁰⁴ The full prayer reveals a belief that the British Empire was on the side of right, but also an awareness that this belief might be wrong. There was, nonetheless, comfort that God was important not only to the allies, but to all the dead or dying of all nations, all the prisoners and all who toil in the war.

O Lord God of infinite mercy and compassion, we humbly beseech Thee to look down upon the nations now engaged in war. Save and defend, we pray Thee, our King and Empire. Give wisdom to our Sovereign and our statesmen, skill to our officers, courage to our soldiers and sailors, and, it if by thy will, victory to our arms. Look in mercy upon all who are immediately exposed to peril, conflict, sickness, and death, and especially those known or dear to us, whom we name in our hearts before Thee. Comfort the prisoners, relieve the sufferings of the wounded, and show mercy to the dying. Give strength to all surgeons and nurses in camp or hospital, and hope to all who throughout the world are in anxiety or

¹⁰² Robert Haddow (ed.), "God and Victory", in *The Presbyterian* 3 September 1914 196.

¹⁰³ McCorkindale, Reverend T. B., "A Prayer in Time of War", in *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 3 September 1914) 199.

¹⁰⁴ McCorkindale, 199.

sorrow. Remove in Thy good providence all causes and occasions of war; dispose the hearts of those engaged therein to moderation and of Thy great goodness restore peace among the nations.¹⁰⁵

There were less humble statements. One of the most enthusiastic Presbyterian progressives in his support of the war, Charles Gordon showed confidence in his appeal for help yet cautioned against expecting God to grant everything:

With a clear conscience and a steadfast heart we can invoke the God, not of battles, but the God of Righteousness and Truth to our aid, after we have made our full preparation; and if by God's good hand our men should not be needed the loss is small, but if the day should come when there was desperate need for our men and we were found unready, how could we dare ask God to help us then?¹⁰⁶

Canadians should not count on God to help them win battles. The country needed to prepare to fight the war to the best of its ability and with the best intentions.

Canadians who had faith and believed they were on the side of right would draw strength from their faith in God.

The freedom to openly express one's faith in God, and be strengthened by it, was one of the freedoms believed to be secured by the British Empire. As a result the denominational press suggested that the success of the British Empire was necessary to safeguard the security and economic well-being of Canada and allow Christianity to flourish.

Dark as is the cloud of war one bright gleam is the stainless honor of the British Empire and name in Britain's share of this awful strife. To the last her leaders sought by every honorable means to preserve peace. Their words are worthy to be written in letters of gold. But all their effort was in vain, and Britain had to draw the sword for truth and freedom....Her flag is made up of the blended crosses of St. Andrew, St. Patrick and St.

¹⁰⁵ McCorkindale, 199.

¹⁰⁶ Gordon, Charles, "Canada's Role", in *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 3 September 1914) 439.

George, massed symbol of the Christian faith and she can fling that flag to the breeze at the head of her legions as they march to war against oppression and wrong, with the consciousness that its symbolism is not dishonored...¹⁰⁷

Again, the Presbyterian press stressed that the Empire best represented and secured Christian values such as truth, righteousness and liberty. Although clearly patriotic in nature these types of editorials illustrate the importance and belief that the Empire was Christian in its foundations and traditions.

True to the belief that one should not get caught up in popular sentiment, but be true to one's faith, the *Presbyterian* also carried pacifist contributions. On 10 September 1914 an editorial suggested:

There is another form of courage, perhaps not often regarded as such, which is sometimes revealed in time of war. We mean the courage of those who dare to withstand the current of popular opinion and popular passion by opposing a war which they believe to be wrong.¹⁰⁸

The following month the same periodical published a letter by R.W. Glover of Vulcan Alberta which emphasized the need for the church to set the example:

Now is the time for action. Let the Church but set some word, some example, for wandering humanity to follow. Let her teach them not only the doctrines, but the ways of peace. The world is waiting for her to speak. If it hears not the call to-day, it expects it to-morrow. Shall they who are waiting exchange hope for despair; shall the dimly seen goal of peace be lost in the clouds of doubt, obscurity and inaction? Let the Church come boldly forth, and say with the people, her people, 'It must never happen again.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ephraim Scott, "The War and Duty's Call", in *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September, 1914).

¹⁰⁸ Robert Haddow (ed.), "The Test of War" in *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 10 September 1914) 220.

¹⁰⁹ R.W. Glover "It Must Never Happen Again" letter in *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 15 October 1914).

These contributions illustrate that there was an openness to differing opinion, at least in the *Presbyterian*. Still pacifist views were in a small minority and for the bulk of the Presbyterian press fighting the war best represented Christian values.

To comprehend why many Presbyterians believed that fighting the German army was a Christian act it is necessary to understand the external factors that influenced Presbyterian thinking in the early months of the war. Early in the war, stories of German violence against the innocent Belgian citizenry occupied the front pages of the *Toronto Globe*. The 11 and 19 September editions of the paper, for example, told of the attack on the Belgian town of Termonde, which was deliberately burned after its citizenry had been given only two hours to leave.¹¹⁰ The plight of Belgium was often stressed with public calls for aid. These calls were often heeded: Ontario farmers donated produce, the City of Toronto donated food, clothing and money and Presbyterians took up a special collection.¹¹¹ These acts would suggest that by the autumn of 1914 stories of Belgian despair were having a considerable effect on the general public. The first stories of “dastardly conduct” on the part of the enemy were also reported in 1914 including the rape of a young French girl by members of an Uhlan regiment.¹¹² Submarine warfare provided further evidence of German oppression; on 24 September the *Globe* reported the

¹¹⁰ “Termonde Burning Blackmailing Job”, *The Globe*, Toronto, 11 September 1914 edition front page and “Destruction of Termonde Completed by Germans”, *The Globe*, Toronto 19 September 1914 edition front page.

¹¹¹ Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 35.

¹¹² “Highlanders Exact Terrible Vengeance”, *The Globe*, Toronto, 22 October 1914, edition front page.

last moments of the British cruisers *Aboukir*, *Cressy* and *Hogue* which sank with very heavy loss of life after they were attacked by German submarines.¹¹³

In the spring of 1915, while the initial enthusiasm in Canada for the war had long since disappeared, grim horrific combat that revealed the brutal nature of the enemy strengthened the determination of the government's many citizens to make a still greater effort. The *Globe* on 3 May 1915, to cite the example of events reported on a single day, carried a story of German brutality as told to them by a Belgian refugee recently arrived in Toronto.¹¹⁴ In her home village of Aerschot this refugee had witnessed the brutal murder of the village's men who were unarmed at the time. In addition, the village priest was hung from a tree and starved before he too was shot for protesting German occupation of the village.¹¹⁵ Beside that account was news that Canadian casualties in the Second Battle of Ypres, the Canadian Expeditionary Force's first major battle, had reached 5000, over a quarter of the strength of the whole force.¹¹⁶ A follow up report on the German use of poisonous gas on the Allies¹¹⁷ shocked public opinion. In three articles on the front page of one paper on a single day in May the nature of the enemy became clear, as did the reasons why Presbyterians were supporting the war. A few days later news of the sinking of the *Lusitania* without warning by a German submarine with the

¹¹³ "Unvarnished Tale of British Heroism", *The Globe*, Toronto, 24 September 1914 edition front page.

¹¹⁴ "German Brutality Told by Eyewitness", *The Globe*, Toronto, 3 May 1915 edition front page.

¹¹⁵ "German Brutality Told by Eyewitness", *The Globe*, Toronto, 3 May 1915 8.

¹¹⁶ "Canadian Casualties May Amount to 5000", *The Globe*, Toronto, 3 May 1915 edition front page.

¹¹⁷ "Gas Germans Used Stupefied Themselves", *The Globe*, Toronto, 3 May 1915 edition front page.

loss of over a thousand civilian passengers, including many Canadians¹¹⁸ added to the picture of a brutal, remorseless enemy. Stories of German cruelty and barbarism continued to mount from returned soldiers and letters. From St. Julien, Private Kenneth Crosby wrote, “We had to retire from one position to another, leaving hundreds of wounded that we could not possibly carry. They were bayoneted as they lay by the Germans.”¹¹⁹ And from a war correspondent, “I entered a town from which Uhlans had just been driven. In a house I found a young girl lying on the floor, both feet cut off at the ankles and both hands cut off at the wrists.”¹²⁰ In October 1915, the front page of the *Globe* reported the execution of British nurse Miss Edith Cavell by Germans in Belgium.¹²¹ These events were the context in which thousands of Presbyterians read their periodicals and attended church services in 1914 and 1915.

The reaction of the denominational press to the stories of gas attacks, the sinking of the *Lusitania* and Canada’s first major battle losses was to continue to discuss the righteousness of the conflict, the importance of the security of the British Empire, the threat of German militarism to Christianity and to be wary of any inclinations to be overtly patriotic or assume that Presbyterians had God on their side. The denominational press understood that for Christian believers the war was an obvious test of their faith. The press attempted to reassure their Presbyterian readers on this point; the literal words of Christ were explained and put into context.

¹¹⁸ Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 46.

¹¹⁹ *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, “German War Methods in Various Countries,” (Toronto: Annual Review Publishing Company, 1916) 61.

¹²⁰ *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, “German War Methods” 61.

¹²¹ “A Modern Martyr”, *The Globe*, Toronto, 26 October 1915 edition front page.

The first major loss of Canadian life forced the Presbyterian papers to comfort those Presbyterians touched by the loss of young lives. Ian Miller tells of a funeral for Captain Robert Darling of the 48th Highlanders held at St. James' Presbyterian Church on Gerard Street in Toronto. The unit had sustained large losses at Second Ypres, and had a high proportion of Presbyterians in its ranks, as many as 30%¹²² as compared to 21.1% in the whole CEF¹²³ and 15.5% of the population in Canada. The church was filled with 48th Highlander comrades, while the coffin was piped in and the royal flag of Scotland was front and center at the lectern. The minister, Reverend Dr. Robertson comforted the grieving with the passage "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Recognizing Captain Darling's sacrifice, Dr. Robertson suggested, "He laid down his life when life was opening for him, holding everything he hoped for or could desire. I am not sure any of us would have it otherwise. It is good to die so. Death is not the worst thing that can happen to a man."¹²⁴

The Presbyterian press continued to try to understand the enemy. The denominational publications focused on German leadership, the military caste and their nationalistic goals. The people of Germany were not evil but they were being led by evil militarism that was a threat to Christianity. In its 16 January 1915 edition the Halifax-based *Witness*, printed a sermon preached by a Reverend Gibson, that the British and Canadian military efforts to rid Germany of evil, to change the heart of the Kaiser, was

¹²² Four companies were sampled. Companies were based on an eight-company organization and are therefore only half the size of ordinary four coy companies. The total sample size of all four companies was 16 officers and 554 other ranks.

¹²³ Desmond Morton, *When Your Numbers Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War*, (Toronto: Random House 1993), 279.

¹²⁴ As quoted in Miller, 42-43.

actually a manifestation of love for Germany.¹²⁵ Support for the war was thus an acceptable Christian position. Gibson explained that the Christian duty to help free Germany of a specific evil did not equivocally imply moral superiority on the part of the Allies, but he came very close to precisely that assertion:

This does not mean that we are the saints and Germans the sinners. Far from it...There has been and there always is so much good in Germany that it was quite impossible for some of us to believe these things till the evidence was overwhelming. And there is so much evil in ourselves, there are so many things to be ashamed of at home, so many evil spirits abroad even in our own beloved land, that it was necessary for us very closely to examine our motives ere we allowed ourselves to be dragged in this war.

Never before was a war entered into by a strong nation with greater reluctance and after more earnest striving for peace... We have been accused of commercial jealousy, but where is the sign of it? Though we were acknowledged master of the sea, the whole world was as free to our German competitors as to ourselves – no check, no tariff wall even, no impediment of any kind to any rivalry or competition of theirs. We have had reason to be ashamed of ourselves in the past in the matter of our commercial interest, notably in the disgrace of the Opium War, but never in any of our dealings with Germany. There our treatment has been not only just but most generous.¹²⁶

An editorial in the same, January 1915, issue of *Witness* addressed the writing of the apostle Paul, ‘having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,’ the editorial asked:

Can we claim this armour? We are far indeed from making any claim for ourselves as a nation or for our allies in the matter of national character: but in this conflict it is surely abundantly evident that we are on the side of truth and righteousness. We stand for the keeping of truth, as opposed to those whose first act was the breaking of a solemn international pledge.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Reverend Gibson “Goodwill to Germany”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, Halifax: 16 January 1915 2.

¹²⁶ Reverend Gibson, “Is Our Record Clean?”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, 16 January 1915, 2.

¹²⁷ Dr. George S. Carson (ed.), “The Armour of God”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 16 January 1915), 2.

One 36 year old Presbyterian, a Canadian Lance Corporal, married with two children, annotated this same passage, Ephesians 6, with the word “Soldiers” in the Bible he carried at the front.¹²⁸ For at least one believer there was a profound conviction that the Canadian soldier was a defender of Christian values.

In the 8 April 1915, issue of the *Presbyterian* Marshall P. Talling addressed the difficulties with prayer during a war between two Christian nations:

The Germans are praying for the victory and so are the British. Both sides cannot have it, so what is the use of their praying?... Both sides cannot have victory; but both sides can win the thing that God wants them to enjoy — His larger Kingdom, and life forevermore. That is the important matter.¹²⁹

Talling’s emphasis was on the over-riding importance of individual faith. Participation in the war would not be the only matter of judgment. It was possible that both a British believer and German believer could be saved. On the issue of the war an individual might be wrong but if faithful, that person could still be saved.

The extremely influential Charles W. Gordon, while confident that the Allies were fighting for righteousness, did not presume that fighting on the side of right would be enough to ensure victory. Gordon, urged virtually open-ended expansion of the Canadian and Allied war effort on the basis of astute observations about the possibility of a long, drawn out war.

After the last struggle, if the estimate of many military observers is correct, both sides will emerge from the conflict severely exhausted – the enemy we hope, more so than we but if the present order of things continues the Allies will have no very great reserve behind their battle line.

¹²⁸ *Holy Bible* - Personnel effects of Lance Corporal Frederick J. Spratlin, killed in action 8 August 1918 from Pratley family private collection.

¹²⁹ Marshall P.Talling, , “War-Difficulties About Prayer”, *The Presbyterian*, Toronto: 8 April 1915

Then will come the Peace proposals and negotiations in which Neutral Nations will doubtless take an important part. The question inevitably arises, whose voice will finally determine the issue? Britain's or that of some Neutral Nation? History leaves us in no doubt as to the answer. It will depend entirely upon the Reserve power behind the man who speaks for us.

If our reserve be small, the dominating voice will be that of the Neutrals clamoring for Peace – Peace upon conditions that to us will be bitterly humiliating and disappointing – For anything less than the utter destruction of German Militarism and the German Naval Menace can only be regarded as a bitter and a humiliating disappointment. And yet if our Line be thin and our resources exhausted, there is the possibility in certain unforeseen contingencies of war of such a combination of Neutral Nations as would force us to accept, as at Ghent, or as Japan at Portsmouth, something a good deal less than we have been contending for and than we consider right or just.¹³⁰

Thus, as early as April 1915, Gordon, a prominent Presbyterian minister and chaplain recognized that the moral order of things did not necessarily ensure Allied victory. He believed strongly in the menace posed by German militarism, and knew that the Allies could not stop short of a complete victory to ensure a lasting peace.

Less than two months later, in June 1915, the 41st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, held in Kingston Ontario, declared that the German prosecution “of this conflict has been a crime against humanity,” and “threatens the progress of Christianity”,¹³¹ In September 1915 Dr. Scott acknowledged that “there is less

¹³⁰ Charles W. Gordon, “Memorandum Re Immediate Enrollment”, 27 April 1915
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/canada_war/gordon/Website/Box%2029/Folder14-Addresses_War/MemoRe-ImmediateEnrollment_1915-Apr-27_pg1.shtml> (14 May 2005)

¹³¹ “Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-First General Assembly”, Kingston, Ontario 2-10 June 1915, (Toronto: Murray Printing Co., 1916) 30.

of shouting and effervescent enthusiasm,”¹³² but “the tragedy to humanity of a German triumph is growing upon the world.”¹³³

Presbyterian opinion leaders understood the righteousness of the conflict in several ways. They understood that German militarism was evil and that the British Empire stood for truth and right. Just as in 1914, they also articulated their hope that they were fighting on the side of God but were careful not to presume that God was on their side or would approve. The Presbyterian opinions expressed in the journals were often careful to note that Presbyterians could not possibly know what God thought of Christian participation in the war. They did however try to make sense of the war by putting it into a Christian context.

Presbyterians, at the end of 1915, were confident in their belief that they were fighting evil, that they were engaged in a spiritual battle, but were still cautious about any claim to know God’s will. In November Dr. Scott repeated his view, “not that God and right are on our side, but that we are on the side of God and right.”¹³⁴ Reverend Alexander MacGillivray in the October 1915 edition of the *Record*:

A war of aggression is sinful, but for us this war is righteous because it is for the defence of the weak and the upholding of right. It is for our own existence as an Empire.¹³⁵

¹³² Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, “A Year and a Month of War”, (Montreal: September, 1915) 385.

¹³³ Scott (ed.), “A Year and a Month of War”, 385.

¹³⁴ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “One Month “Less” of War”, *The Presbyterian Record* (Montreal: November 1915) 523.

¹³⁵ Reverend Alexander MacGillivray, “One Hundred Years of Peace”, *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: October 1915) 467.

Presbyterian readers were consistently cautioned not to presume that God was on their side; rather, with guarded anticipation, they hoped they were acting on the side of God. This desire to fight on the side of God was closely linked to the belief that the war was in defence of the weak and the upholding of right, a belief that represented fundamental Christian values.

It was not lost on Presbyterians that scripture, taken literally, would suggest that Christian values might only support a pacifist position. Presbyterian periodicals took up this challenge and debated the interpretation of Christ's words. The May 1915 edition of the *Record* asked these pertinent questions:

The soldier trains on Sunday in the highest ideals of love to God, and trains on Monday to shoot, to kill. He hears on Sunday – “Love your enemies;” and on Monday – “Charge.” Are these consistent? Does the one who bids the former approve the latter? Would Christ, if on earth, commend this war? The question simply is – “Does Christ approve.” Most of us will have no difficulty in deciding that He cannot approve the selfish aggression of Germany, in forcing war. But does He approve our men when they train and fight to hinder evil, to right wrong, to save the life of our Empire and of the world?

Who can know the mind of Christ, save as declared, and yet some points may be noted as gathering around this question.

(1) All such commands as – “Love your enemies” – refer to attitude of mind and heart; to the aim, the motive with which men do what seems the duty of life, even though it be the duty of stopping evil and death, by stopping the life that is wrongfully causing that evil and death.

(2) Does Christ approve the verdict of a jury which, sworn to do its duty according to the laws of the land, finds the murderer guilty; or the judge who, in obedience to the same law, follows that verdict with the sentence of death; or the executioner who carries out that sentence? All such questions answer themselves.

(3) God loves the sinner, yearns over him with infinite pity, and yet, by irrevocable laws for nature, punishes that sinner in the bodily suffering and the untimely death that is the result of sin.

(4) In both Old and new Testaments death came as the direct visitation of God upon men and women for sin.

(5) All through the Old Testament the wars of God's people were God's wars against wickedness and wrong and were waged at His command.

The Sunday service in the Church and the Monday service in the trench are one, and upon the man, not the place, depends the character of both.¹³⁶

The Lord's injunction to "Love your enemies" was often discussed in Presbyterian sermons and periodicals. An article entitled the "Perils of War", in the November 1915 issue of the *Presbyterian*, concluded "it is right that we should hate wrongdoing and cruelty wherever they appear... But if we are to be true to Christ we must not allow our hatred for the evil action to extend even to the person who is guilty of it."¹³⁷ The article argued that Christians could resolve apparent contradictions of a just war through prayer "we should pray also that God's help and comfort may be given to those who have to suffer among our adversaries as well as among ourselves."¹³⁸

A different view was offered by Charles Allan in his publication *The Beautiful Thing That Has Happened to Our Boys*, which appeared in October 1915. It suggested that the true meaning of the phrase was to be mindful of your enemy's soul, his essence, "the thing deepest in him and you, which for the time he has forgotten, but which you being Christian must remember."¹³⁹ Presbyterians were told that they might dislike the action of the German soldier but they were not to dislike the man. Germans had suffered too and had been led by bad impulses.

¹³⁶ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "Khaki at Church", (Montreal: May 1915), 194.

¹³⁷ Dr. Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, "Perils of War", (Toronto: November 1915)

¹³⁸ Haddow, "Perils of War"

¹³⁹ Charles Allan, *The Beautiful Thing That Has Happened to Our Boys and Other Messages in War Time*, (Edinburgh: James McKelvie & Sons Ltd. 1915) 21. The publication was a compilation of messages and sermons delivered at a Scottish church and advertised in Canadian periodicals.

While Presbyterian opinion leaders put forth their views individual Presbyterians were still empowered to make their own decision about their faith. A letter to the editor in the April 1915 issue of the *Presbyterian* showed that Presbyterians were more than willing to reflect critically on what they heard from the pulpit and their periodicals:

We have no need to be penitent that we showed our sincere love of peace by devoting our energies to industry rather than to military training. It has been rightly said that Germany's perfect preparation is her condemnation...In the meantime Christian ministers are justified in expounding to their people the principles for which we are contending, and helping them to understand intelligently...¹⁴⁰

The letter is an excellent example of one Presbyterian's ability to square pre-war opposition to militarism with full support of the war effort. It was written as a rebuttal to an earlier editorial which suggested that sermons preached about the war were wrongly patriotic and did nothing more than reflect the arrogance of the newspapers of the time.¹⁴¹

Fear of death and sorrow appeared to dominate the thinking of both believers and non-believers during the latter part of 1915, as the Canadian military effort increased and the casualty lists grew longer and more frequent. Fear of loss, and faith as a solution, was the topic of an editorial in the October 1915 edition of the *Witness*:

One of the effects of the war is not only to create a great fear in the hearts of multitudes of good people, but also to deepen the pall of darkness by which the minds of doubters and unbelievers are enshrouded and to intensify the pessimism so prevalent in many quarters. Many who contemplate the unspeakable agony and sorrow caused in the earth by the ravages of this awful war find their hearts failing them for fear and have no answer to make to the taunts of the tempter. There is an answer and a satisfying answer to much that on the surface may seem to contradict our hopes and to give the lie to our Christianity; but many have not

¹⁴⁰ W.G. Jordan, "Penitence and Patriotism", Letter to the Editor of *The Presbyterian*, (1 April 1915), 358.

¹⁴¹ Jordan, "Penitence and Patriotism" 358.

entered into the secret of this truth and know nothing by experience of the power and comfort of this great assurance.¹⁴²

Believers who had reconciled death and their faith understood that holding on to the temporal was not of faith. Rather, life was just one moment. The true beginning of new and everlasting life was after one's earthly existence was over.

In September 1915, the *Presbyterian* addressed the issue of death in a forthright manner, tackling the apprehensions young people would have in reconciling death, "it is rather the thought of leaving the good earth with its affections and delights and abandoning the plans and ambitions which one had formed. But these are false alarms."¹⁴³ In that same month, the *Record* stressed the ideals of sacrifice and service:

Let this war time rather be a reminder that the true ideal of life is service; that men and women can find their chief end, their greatest happiness, their most glorious destiny, not in restful ease, but in self-forgetfulness, in full surrender to their great Leader, and in faithful following of Him, even unto death.¹⁴⁴

These would be amongst the first of many times the Presbyterian press made reference to the need for Christians to reconcile their faith and death. The ideals of service and the eternal salvation offered to believers in Christ would become a foundation of the Presbyterian message as deaths continued to mount.

Amongst certain Presbyterians there was, in 1915, a sense that the war might in fact bring about a revival of Christianity. There was a hope that those Canadians who had

¹⁴² Reverend George S. Carson (ed.), "Faith Versus Fear", *The Presbyterian Witness*, (16 October 1915), 4.

¹⁴³ Dr. Robert Haddow (ed.), "Why Fear Death", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 9 September 1915), 246

¹⁴⁴ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.) "A Year and A Month of War", *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September 1915), 387.

lapsed in their faith would return to the church searching for answers and comfort in those devastating times. It would appear that the church counted on this type of revival to spread some of the fundamentals of the social gospel movement. This movement was described by David Marshall in his book *Secularizing the Faith* as an emphasis put on Christian ethics and principles in order to bring about change to the social order: the “perfectibility of human society through the appreciation of Christian ethical principles.”¹⁴⁵ While the “war on alcohol” was fought in the pages of all the Presbyterian periodicals the revivalist theme was most explicit in the *Presbyterian* and the *Witness*.

According to the *Witness* 25 September 1915:

During the opening months of the war there was hope and also evidence that not only in Britain, but in the countries of the Allies, and also of the enemy, a great religious awakening would be born out of this conflict, and that the minds of men would be recalled to the higher and worthier things of life. We are far from saying that this has not been, in a measure realized. It is certain that large numbers have been deeply moved by the tragedy of the war, that a more serious spirit has possessed some communities... But has the heart of the nation as a whole been touched deeply? Are men forsaking their follies and sins, turning away from their selfish pursuits and giving themselves to the service of God and of their country in this dark hour?¹⁴⁶

In a similar vein were the following passages from 1915 editions of the

Presbyterian:

But victory for the Allies will not by itself result in making God’s Kingdom prevail upon the earth. Unfortunately not one of the allied nations has succeeded in establishing that kingdom with unchallenged authority even within its own bounds...How can there be peace while a comparative few possess nearly all the wealth and use it as a screw to press still more out of the mass of their fell countrymen? How can we say

¹⁴⁵ Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 156.

¹⁴⁶ Dr. George S. Carson (ed.), “The Divine Message in the War”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 25 September 1915), 4.

that God's Kingdom has come while vice exists, not hidden and hunted like a serpent, but tolerated and entrenched, setting its snares openly and defiantly along the public way? Long after the present war is over the conflict must still go on for the overthrow of Satan's strongholds and the bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.¹⁴⁷

The facts of the situation are unmistakably clear. The great European War, which has stirred our Empire to the depths, and has shaken the entire world has been anything but an unmixed evil. The loss of life, the sacrifice of gallant men has been tragically appalling. But a new spirit has been called forth amongst the nations. Men are rising to high ideals of self-denial and service and sacrifice to a remarkable degree. The best, as well as the worst, within a man is being called into activity. And as a glorious contrast to the descent of the German Huns to practices of barbarities and of poisoning, we have the response of white nations to the practice of temperance and the display of heroism. And it can no longer be doubted that men are becoming susceptible to moral movements and spiritual impulses to a wonderful extent.

With this increased readiness of men to listen to the voice of God, with the collapse of much in the Christianity of the past, and with the possibilities of a radiant future, it is incumbent on us to utter a message that shall reach the heart of men in the great, coming days.¹⁴⁸

Advocates of the social gospel believed that the equality engendered by the shared experience of war would lead men to lead more Christian lives. The threat posed to Christianity by Germany would encourage social gospel beliefs.

In addition to contributions and editorials urging Presbyterians to focus on their individual lives and sins as a manner of turning the world towards perfection, there was in 1915 still the occasional contribution espousing a pacifist agenda, most often, as before the war, in the liberal *Presbyterian*. An appeal for humility, and acceptance of shared responsibility for the war appeared in the November 1915 edition of that journal:

¹⁴⁷ Dr. Robert Haddow (ed.), "The Greater Conflict", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 29 April 1915) 1.

¹⁴⁸ Dr. W. Harvey-Jellie, "After the War", *The Presbyterian*, 27 May 1915 550.

We have all helped to support a system under which each nation sought to defend and advance its own interests with little or no regard for the interests of others. Lordship has been our ambition and our boast-with one nation the lordship of the land, with another the lordship of the seas. We have sought security by way of supremacy, rather than by an agreement among the nations in which the interest of each should be defended by the power of all.¹⁴⁹

From the outbreak of war to the end of 1915 the issues of truth and righteousness were a mainstay in the Presbyterian press. The depiction of the Kaiser and German military might as evil remained steadfast during this entire period. There did not appear to be a radical change in Presbyterian opinion in 1915 after extensive coverage of the *Lusitania*, the use of gas and the murder of Nurse Edith Cavell. In fact, the *Globe* illustrates that even as early as the fall of 1914 German atrocities in Termonde and Louvain were front page news and German atrocity stories were also discussed at this time in the denominational papers. Most notably Charles W. Gordon, the famed author, former minister and senior chaplain to the Canadian forces in England, continued to remain steadfast in his defense of the war and in the Christian values that framed his support. What was particularly extraordinary about this influential Presbyterian and his resolve was that by the summer of 1915 fully 160 members of his Winnipeg congregation had enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and 87 of them had been killed in action, the largest number of casualties from any single congregation in Canada.¹⁵⁰

The year 1915 did see certain aspects of the war emphasized. There was clearly a belief by some in the war's second year that the conflict would bring about a revival or popularity of Christianity. According to these lengthy contributions the war should serve

¹⁴⁹ "The Perils of War", *The Presbyterian*, 4 November 1915 438.

¹⁵⁰ Fraser, *The Social Uplifters*, 160-161.

to force Presbyterians to focus on their own lives and individual sins. If Presbyterians could rid themselves of their vices Canada and the world would better exemplify God's Kingdom. Another significant change in Presbyterian discourse with the somber observance of a year at war was the need to openly discuss death in the Christian context. Although death was something all Christians eventually had to reconcile in their journey with Christ, the loss of Canadian life at the front made this side of Christianity more important to a younger group of people. Had war not forced Christians to deal with death, young Presbyterians may not have focused on this aspect of their faith.

There is no question that some Presbyterians may have been caught up in the patriotic fervor of the moment but many of the Presbyterian editors and authors remained calmly steadfast in their support for a war based on their ideas of truth, righteousness and the evil of German militarism, and the "just war" tradition of their faith. Throughout the years of the conflict the church periodicals, sermons and other literature continued to consider the critical questions in the process of reconciling Christianity with the act of waging war. Presbyterians did not appear to be taken in by atrocity stories, nor was there "critical acquiescence" as the conflict dragged on, most of the evidence found in the denominational press suggests Presbyterians solidly believed that this war was just.

Chapter Two: The Great Crusade to Total War

“Canada’s Great Gift to British Empire’s Cause Will Help Allies to Finish the War in 1916: Dominion Army to be Increased to Half a Million Men,”¹⁵¹ proclaimed the headline of the *Toronto Globe* on New Year’s Day 1916. Canadians were asked to increase their commitment not only in manpower but also in wealth. The second appeal for the Canadian Patriotic Fund, established to ensure adequate support was given to the wives and dependents of soldiers, was launched in the newspapers on that same day.¹⁵²

While the Canadian government was committing more men to combat, the *Presbyterian* ran editorials that attempted to examine future alternatives to war. In the 20 January 1916 issue the editor asked “Is There Any Hope?”

Though law, treaties and conventions have broken down, we must try to rebuild them, try to rebuild them more firmly, with better provision for their support. We must depend on reason, not on force, for the maintenance of peace. In no other direction is there any hope.¹⁵³

Peace could not be maintained until it was achieved through victory over evil and in 1916 victory seemed a long way off. The newspapers of 1916 were full of news of the loss of more young Canadian lives in horrific battles at the front. High casualty rates for 2nd Division in their first action at St. Eloi in April and for 3rd Division at Mount Sorrel in defense of Ypres meant stories of death and destruction were inescapable. The *Globe* for 24 April 1916 carried news on the edition’s front page of Canadian gallantry and

¹⁵¹ “Canada’s Great Gift to British Empire’s Cause Will Help Allies to Finish the War in 1916: Dominion Army to be Increased to Half a Million Men”, *The Globe*, (Toronto: 1 January 1916), edition front page.

¹⁵² *The Globe*, (Toronto: 1 January 1916), edition front page.

¹⁵³ Dr. Robert Haddow (ed.), “Is There Any Hope?”, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 20 January 1916), 53-54.

perseverance at St. Eloi.¹⁵⁴ Third Division's first action, including news of the heaviest bombardment so far experienced by Canadian troops, was reported in June editions of the *Globe*. The 5 June 1916 headline read, "Canadian Troops in a Hard Battle at Ypres Gen. Mercer Wounded; Gen. Williams Captured."¹⁵⁵ June 1916 also brought the announcement of a pending Allied offensive.¹⁵⁶ In the following month there were reports of notable gains at the Somme¹⁵⁷ but the slow and costly nature of the offensive became fully evident in the 2 November 1916 issue of the *Globe*, that reported the limits of British and Canadian success to the north and northeast of Schwaben Redoubt.¹⁵⁸ This news allowed readers to understand how little had been gained in four months of intense, bloody combat.

The ideas expressed in 1916 and 1917 differed from those of the first months of the war largely in the way the religious press handled the issues put forward in the secular press. Death, conscription and premature peace were discussed because the secular press in 1916 and 1917 emphasized these questions. From the outbreak of war the Presbyterian periodicals were consistent in defending the justice and righteousness of the cause, of the need to defend Christian values such as liberty and the need to fight evil, be it in the form of German atrocities, German militarism or German nationalism. From the autumn of

¹⁵⁴ "Gallantry of the Canadians in St. Eloi Struggle", "Canadians win New Laurels", and "Many Daring Deeds By Ontario Soldiers," *The Globe*, Toronto, Monday 24 April 1916 edition front page.

¹⁵⁵ "British Lose Some Hooge Trenches – Canadian Casualties Heavy," *The Globe*, Toronto, 5 and 8 June 1916, edition front page.

¹⁵⁶ "Indications of General Allied Offensive in West", *The Globe*, Toronto, 27 June 1916, edition front page

¹⁵⁷ "Allies Score Victories on East and West Fronts, *The Globe*, Toronto, 31 July 1916, edition front page

¹⁵⁸ "British Gain Against Odds", *The Globe*, Toronto, 2 November 1916, edition front page

1914 the Presbyterian press proclaimed the righteousness of the Empire but cautioned against being overtly patriotic. The denominational papers wrestled with the individual sins of Canadians and of Canada and the Empire in comparison with the sins of Germany. Throughout the long struggle the Presbyterian journals above all attempted to assist its readers in reconciling their faith and war, where the teachings of the denomination or Christianity in general were put to the test by the conflict, the papers attempted to address these issues. For the believers who read these publications the messages of hope were either hotly debated or comforting, either way the issues of death and peace that were raised in 1916 and 1917 were bound to continue with the war.

Presbyterian sermons and periodicals did not shrink from either the agony of death or its magnitude. On 12 October 1916 the *Presbyterian* featured an article entitled “Soldiers of the Light”, which argued, “the good soldier does not seek death. He does not covet suffering. But he does not evade it. He performs the duty which lies before him and takes what comes. So it ought to be in all life.”¹⁵⁹ A sermon delivered by Reverend Thomas Eakin of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Toronto provided a similar message, “the object of man upon the earth is... to be always aware of the spiritual that surrounds and underlies the material life of man, the destiny that awaits man, and to live for that.”¹⁶⁰ In order to deal with the deaths of so many young people the Presbyterian press emphasized even more than in 1915 the basic Christian principle of eternal salvation. Believers were to find comfort that true life begins upon earthly death. While young people

¹⁵⁹ Robert Haddow (ed.), “Soldiers of the Light”, *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 12 October 1916)

¹⁶⁰ “Is the War Promoting Religion or Destroying It?” delivered by Reverend Thomas Eakin, 12 November 1916, *Eakin Papers*, Archives of Presbyterian Church in Canada Accession # 207/0536

with so much to live for might not fully appreciate this principle, they were reminded that reconciling death was a fundamental part of being Christian.

As the cost in young lives mounted, the Presbyterian press continued in the late summer and autumn of 1916, to validate the war as righteous and offered explanations for this position in a Christian context. These same periodicals continued to caution readers not to presume that God was on the side of the Allies and openly debated whether or not the war was a failure of Christianity. Patriotic support for the war was evident as were ideas of shared responsibility and the common problem of militarism in friendly as well as enemy states. The idea of Germany as a threat to Christianity continued to be discussed in the Presbyterian journals during this time.

In September 1916, the main editorial page of the *Record* emphasized that the choice was between an Allied military victory that would allow all nations to live in peace or alternatively, continued oppression by German brutality. Incidents such as the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the execution of Nurse Edith Cavell were cited as examples of German brutality.¹⁶¹ Dr. Scott, in the *Record*, balanced the appeal for military resolve with profound sympathy for the mounting numbers of families grieving the loss in battle of their loved ones.

But the price! The price! How little those can realize who have not paid that price! The price of victory? What is it? Go ask the wife whose husband's home-coming when his work was done made bright the day with hope and the evening with that hope fulfilled; but whose days and evenings alike are shadowed now, for that strong step will be heard no more. Ask the children who wonder why daddy does not come, and who are beginning to realize with a nameless dread that he will not come again. Ask the father and mother whose son, perhaps an only one, in whom

¹⁶¹ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), "Victory and its Price", *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September 1916)

centred the love and hopes of the home, lies “somewhere” in an unknown grave. All these know something of the price.

They may be told of the heroism that like a halo surrounds that grave, of the glory of a life given for freedom’s sacred cause, of the results beyond measure to the world; but the sore heart feels as yet only the price paid, the loneliness and pain. Time, the great healer, will gradually make it less hard to bear; but in the meantime it is to those who are paying, at such cost, the great price, that the sympathy of a nation should go out, and for them a nation’s prayers ascend.¹⁶²

At the same time as thoughts of the devastating effects of the war both at the front and at home were included in the prayers of Canadian Presbyterians, the periodicals continued to underscore the justness of the cause. The question of where God stood on the war was discussed throughout 1916. In June 1916 the editor of the *Record* discussed God as an unchanging factor in the war:

The Third Factor in this war is God,...What part he takes, or where or how, we know not. That is His own affair. This we know: “The Lord reigneth” and whatever of ill may be wrought by the great Adversary of all good and his unholy train; and however sin and greed may for a time shadow and sadden our world, the wrong must meet its doom; and our part, in darkness as in light, is to link ourselves, by faith and trust and purpose and effort, with God; to follow his guidance and do His will; till right shall triumph and the world’s song of freedom have not one jarring note.¹⁶³

In July 1916, an editorial reprinted in the *Witness* from the United Free Church of Scotland *Record*, compared the moral correctness of the Federal, anti-slavery cause in the American Civil war with that of the Allied cause in the Great War:

We shall point to the sword on the wall and be proud of the memory of those who have fallen. We shall be glad that they took their part on God’s side in the great struggle, and helped to purge the world of the

¹⁶² Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “Victory and its Price”, *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September 1916)

¹⁶³ Dr. Ephraim Scott, “Three Factors in War”, *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: June 1916), 242.

principalities and powers of evil that threatened its highest well-being. It is not ours to question and criticize and judge for, after all, we know nothing of the real unseen forces that are shaping the destiny of the world. We can only fall back on the one sure fact that behind and beyond all stands the Eternal God.¹⁶⁴

As the war continued, seemingly with no end, Presbyterians were reminded that feeling hopeless about the state of the world was forgetting the role of God. Knowing that the destiny of the world was in God's hands would provide comfort in a desperate situation. The *Presbyterian*, in August 1916, suggested that had Britain not gone to war she would have made a "deliberate choice of moral evil," and "She would have turned her back upon God,"¹⁶⁵ and the cause of German militarism would have been justified. For many of the editors and contributors to the *Presbyterian* the message was clear; in going to war Britons believed they were on the side of God against evil.

The justness of the cause, particularly the notion that the Allies' action in going to war was based in love, was also restated in an article contributed by Dr. William Grenfell, a well known Christian medical missionary and hero in Newfoundland and Labrador, to the September 1916 edition of the *Record*:

America stands for a family of all nations under God –equal, free and happy. For this idea France and England are giving their life-blood. America is looking on and getting rich. I have counseled all I love most on earth to enter on the side of the Allies. I have stood by their graves "somewhere in France." Love is a more durable factor for peace than war. But force is love sometimes, and, though we do not like it, *via crucis* is now the only *via lucis*.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Author unknown, "The Sword on the Wall", *United Free Church of Scotland Record*, reprinted in the *Presbyterian Witness*, Dr. George S. Carson (ed.), (Halifax: 8 July 1916).

¹⁶⁵ Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, "A Deeper Wound", (Toronto: 24 August 1916).

¹⁶⁶ Dr. Grenfell, "America's Attitude to the War", *The Outlook*, reprinted in the *Presbyterian Record*, (Toronto: September 1916). *The Outlook* was an independent weekly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Dr. Grenfell's missionary work was revered throughout North America he was considered a Christian hero.

A sermon preserved in the personal papers of Reverend Eakin dated 12 November 1916 and originally delivered in the High United Free Church in Edinburgh, Scotland, underscored the need for an unwavering faith in God. It is difficult to ascertain whether Eakin actually delivered this sermon, the writing of which is attributed to Professor H.R. MacKintosh. Important however, is that the themes espoused by this Scottish minister were very similar to the themes discussed by Canadian Presbyterian leaders.

We are not going to say that faith in God is dependent on the victory of the Allies. That righteousness must win eventually and in the profoundest sense, is no doubt most credible, but at present I am speaking of outward military triumph. The only conceivable position faith can occupy is 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him'. Assuming that, however, we may and do have a strong conviction, not without substantial grounds, that God will vindicate our just cause. It is sometimes said that God crucifies the right. Perhaps: but also he has often led righteousness to triumph. He did that in the day of the Spanish Armada; he did it centuries later in the Napoleonic struggle; fifty years ago he did it most manifestly in the American Civil War. There is nothing presumptuous but rather courageous and trustful in the belief that he will do it once again.¹⁶⁷

While the sermon gave examples of God leading righteousness to victory, it suggested that humility was important. One might have a strong conviction that God would vindicate the Allied position, but one should not presume that God was taking one particular side. Presbyterians were counseled to be courageous enough to trust God's path, and to believe that Good would triumph over Evil eventually. However, the sermon also advised Presbyterians that their own faith in God must not be determined by victory

¹⁶⁷ Professor H.R. MacKintosh, "The War and Divine Fatherhood" 12 November 1916, *Eakin Papers*, Archives of Presbyterian Church in Canada Accession # 207/0536. There were a couple of sermons similar to the one above included in Eakin's personal papers. There is no indication if it was actually delivered by Eakin or simply used as a reference. Whatever its influence, Eakin felt it worthwhile to keep.

in war. The sermon emphasized the importance of individual faith and the individual's ability to lead a more Christian life. Presbyterians were to look within themselves and change their individual behaviour to be more Christ-like. "Whether this war is to issue in a balance of good over evil is not as yet decided. It largely depends upon ourselves. It depends to an indefinitely wide extent on what we gain by the war in the way of wisdom, unselfishness, readiness to co-operate with God."¹⁶⁸

For all the similarities in the various periodicals about the just war and triumph of good over evil, the Presbyterian periodicals approached patriotism in differing ways. In June 1916 the Reverend E. Leslie Pidgeon, in a topic chosen specifically for youth, discussed what constitutes a national hero. In his commentary those who chose not to serve were branded cowards and disbelievers. The choice not to serve was not of Christianity but rather of selfishness, the choice to serve was revered:

Here is first of all the man who sees deeply into the eternal meaning of things. The essence of the world and the constitution of things he knows to be good.

He is a man of belief and faith. He knows that the whole universe is behind the man who does well, and whose actions have an eternal significance.

National heroism is a quality of faith. National cowardice is a symptom of unbelief. The soldier who bravely gives his life for the maintenance of principles, does so because he believes, however unconsciously, that the nature of things is with him. The coward runs because his belief is: "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ MacKintosh, Professor H.R., "The War and Divine Fatherhood" included in the personal papers of Reverend Thomas Eakin, 12 November 1916, *Eakin Papers*, Archives of Presbyterian Church in Canada Accession # 207/0536

¹⁶⁹ Reverend E. Leslie Pidgeon, "National Heroes and National Cowards", *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: June 1916) 260.

Pidgeon's views and similar examples of patriotic fervour were challenged by Principal Gandier of Knox College. In a lecture delivered at the opening session of the college on 28 September 1916 and printed in *The Presbyterian*, Gandier cautioned against the Protestant tendency to promote a nationalistic agenda over a missionary one:

The Protestant Churches, on the other hand, having identified themselves with the struggles of the freedom-loving peoples of the north for a real national life, could not be and did not aspire to be catholic. They became national rather than missionary....The maintenance of the national life became the objective rather than the coming in of Christ's spiritual kingdom for man as such. The wars of the nation, whether right or wrong, were espoused by the Church, which blessed the troops as they went forth to battle and hung their blood-stained banners upon the walls of her sanctuaries when they returned. A narrow nationalism and the substitution of patriotism for that enthusiasm of humanity which characterized Jesus and the early Christians, has been the curse of modern Europe and is the cause of this present war.¹⁷⁰

Gandier was increasingly worried about the growth of militarism in the churches' focus on the justness of war at the expense of expanding God's word to the unfaithful:

Preparedness has its place under present world conditions; but not that way lies the hope of world peace -not that way lies the overthrow of the materialism which deifies force. In the midst of the universal call to arms and the effort to meet force by greater force has the Church herself courage to say that, at this very moment, our safety lies, not primarily in our army and navy, but in how we stand with God? A dangerously prevalent heresy at the present time is that just now the fight with the Germans is the one thing that matters. The fight with sin and Satan can be left till the war is over.¹⁷¹

Gandier's critical view of the churches' role in justifying the war was nevertheless tempered by a belief that the British Empire provided the best example of an Empire based on Christian values:

¹⁷⁰ Principal Gandier, "Knox College Lecture", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 28 September 1916) 275.

¹⁷¹ Gandier, "Knox College Lecture", 274.

The British Empire has no cast-iron constitution. Its various overseas dominions, including men of every race, color, and type, are not even federated. There is little military compulsion but local autonomy and self-government wherever these are possible. It is in all things the direct opposite of what German Imperialists hold to be essential in an empire; and yet these widely scattered and diverse members stand to-day in a unity of spirit, a oneness of aim and action that command success and guarantee its future.¹⁷²

Gandier's lecture suggests just how complex the views of a leading Presbyterian educator could be. A critic of narrow nationalism who favoured non-violent solutions to conflict was able to reconcile these ideas with support for the war effort waged by the British Empire against German imperialism. He believed that the fight was against evil in a Christian context but was against any notion that Presbyterians living in Canada, were without sin. Gandier's interpretation, when compared to that of Leslie Pidgeon, is a clear indication of the variety of ideas presented to Presbyterians through the medium of their periodicals in 1916.

The very ideas that the war was a campaign in support of Christianity and that German militarism was a threat to Christianity were also debated in 1916. An editorial in the *Record* entitled "Germany's Wanderings" discussed Germany's journey away from Christianity under the influence of Prussian nationalism and militarism. This was why the *Record* concluded that German domination of Europe was a threat to Christianity. "The authority of Scripture has been more or less depreciated and human wisdom exalted, and the religious life of the world has suffered."¹⁷³ Clearly there was a sense that as much as German domination would be a threat to the Canadian way of life both in terms of economics and democracy it would also be a threat to a Christian way of life. The

¹⁷² Gandier, "Knox College Lecture", 276.

¹⁷³ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), "Germany's Wanderings" *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: September 1916)

Witness suggested that the war was worthwhile because the way in which the world was heading prior to the war could not be sustained. The *Witness* stated, “We shall think of the time before the war broke out – of the general unrest, of the nations armed to the teeth, of the lowering of moral and spiritual ideals, of the gradual break from Christianity on the part of Germany.”¹⁷⁴ The theme of German militarism as the enemy of Christ was also developed in the lecture delivered by Principal Gandier at the opening of Knox College and reprinted in the *Presbyterian* in September 1916:

The German militarists are doomed to failure because they are fighting against those things for which Jesus Christ stands in human history. Their conception of the Kingdom and of the methods by which it comes are pagan and false; and, not only has this perverted their morals, it has destroyed their moral discernment.¹⁷⁵

Gandier cited the German historian Treitschke’s philosophy of the state’s moral duty to safeguard its power, because there is nothing higher than the state in the history of the world. He noted that Treitschke’s lectures were filled with German students, suggesting the growing threat to Christianity from within Germany:

Here then is a deliberate renunciation of Christ and His teachings so far as the state is concerned. For the State to act in accordance with the spirit of Christ and make any sacrifice for the good of another people is for the State what the sin against the Holy Ghost is for the individual Christian. Surely the denial or perversion of Christianity can go no further; and the Church must meet this challenge or stultify herself.¹⁷⁶

Gandier was not alone in his belief that the teachings of many educators in Germany posed a great danger to Christianity. Although the exact date during the war is

¹⁷⁴ *United Free Church of Scotland Record*, “The Sword on the Wall”, reprinted in *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax : 8 July 1916).

¹⁷⁵ Principal Gandier, “The Challenge of this War to the Church,” *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 5 October 1916), 273.

¹⁷⁶ Gandier, “The Challenge of the War to the Church”, 275.

unknown similar fears were found in the handwritten notes of Charles W. Gordon. Under the heading Treitschke was the following:

- essence of state = power (moral power)
- authority final and supreme – no higher power than itself
- therefore “arms will maintain rights and in that lies the sacredness of war”
- therefore small state ludicrous – and must give way to great

Nietzsche (philosophy)

- the Superman
- 2 classes masters slaves
- Christ contemptible, Christian virtues,
- Superman must control ideal = Napoleon¹⁷⁷

For Canadian Presbyterians the notion that teachings in Germany represented anti-Christian values was very real. While the Presbyterian periodicals spent much of war-time underscoring that God was the highest power, the most important element in the destiny of the world, Germans were being taught that there was no higher power than the authority of the state.

Peace without Victory: A Threat to Christianity

The fear of German power and the values it represented became even more obvious when, in late 1916, Germany asked that the Allied powers state their terms to end the war. It was no wonder that this German offer was condemned in the press and rejected by the Allies. It was considered to be offered as part of Germany's war plan and was an appeal based on the premise that Germany was unable to win on the battlefield.¹⁷⁸ When this appeal was rejected, in December 1916, US President Woodrow Wilson

¹⁷⁷University of Manitoba, Archives and Special Collections, *Charles W. Gordon Fonds*, MSS 56, Box 29, Folder 10 (accessed 13 May 2005)
<www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/canada_war/gordon/Website/Box%2029/Folder%2010-Sermons_and_Notes_Wa-JtoZ/thumbnails.shtml>

¹⁷⁸ Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 58.

offered to mediate.¹⁷⁹ Wilson's appeal, which in the eyes of many Canadians attempted to address the two sides as equals, was rejected by both the secular and religious press.¹⁸⁰ When at the end of the year the *Globe* reported that the Russian parliament strongly opposed Germany's peace proposals¹⁸¹ and that Germany's power had yet to be broken¹⁸², the *Presbyterian* offered commentary. The paper called for a peace arranged by an international tribunal and the formation of a league of nations as "the best way to secure the destruction of 'Prussia's military domination.'"¹⁸³ If a lasting peace was to be established, "justice demanded Germany suffer for her violations of the laws of humanity in her conduct of the war."¹⁸⁴ Although the *Presbyterian* advocated an international tribunal, the destruction of German power was first and foremost the only way to ensure a lasting peace.

As 1917 began, the *Presbyterian* periodicals were filled with reactions to President Woodrow Wilson's peace proposals, including the problems that would arise from a premature peace without a clear allied victory. The *Record* continued to describe the war in terms of the defense of basic principles and the triumph of freedom over tyranny:

What issues hang upon it? It is not merely a question of victory or defeat for one nation or another. It means freedom or bondage to the world. Were tyranny to triumph, it would mean the human race

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 59.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹⁸¹ "Duma Strongly Opposes Foe's Peace Proposals", *The Globe*, Toronto: 16 December 1916, edition front page.

¹⁸² "Time for Peace Not Yet Come" and "Foe Sought Peace Ere Battle Ended", *The Globe*, Toronto: 23 and 30 December 1916 edition front page.

¹⁸³ Robert Haddow (ed.), "Peace Proposals and Peace Principals", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 21 December 1916), 539.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

turned backwards for centuries; for the ideals of this despotism are those for which in a cruder form the world began to emerge centuries ago.¹⁸⁵

The *Record* insisted that no matter how long and bloody the struggle was, it was fought for principles and in terms of peace those principles had to be realized.

The Reverend Thomas Eakin addressed the peace proposals in a sermon entitled “Blessed Are the Peacemakers.” Eakin was patriotic in tone but was still prudent not to appear over zealous in his support for Britain and the Empire.

That there is therefore a difference between wars if anyone were to ask me “are you against war” I should reply it depends on the war. There is a man in Great Britain today who risked his life, he was in danger of assassination because he condemned the S.A. War and that same man is exercising all his genius to carry this present war to a successful termination – that man is Lloyd George – There is war for gain – and war for principal. And they are removed as far as darkness from light.

Great Britain has entered wars in the past with (cause) none too clear and motives none too high. But we were never prouder of our Empire than we are today. To have stood aside and allowed the insane ambition of a crowned despot to work his savage will on a hapless helpless unsuspecting people... would have condemned us for ever.¹⁸⁶

Eakin suggested that not all wars were the same, this war was important because of the reasons for which it was fought, for despotism to be defeated the principles for which Britain went to war would have to be ensured.

Charles W. Gordon was yet another prominent Presbyterian to suggest that peace without victory would be foolish. In a January 1917 speech to the Empire Club of Toronto Gordon addressed the issue:

¹⁸⁵ *The Presbyterian Record*, “The New Year”, January 1917, Montreal.

¹⁸⁶ Eakin, Reverend Dr. Thomas, “Blessed Are The Peacemakers”, delivered on 11 February 1917, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, *Eakin Papers*, Archives of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Accession #207/0706

Our claim is that a peace without victory is an impossibility an absolute impossibility. Because a peace without victory is insecure. Remember we in Great Britain and the rest of the Empire have no foolish notions about military glory. We have glory, and military glory, that will never, never fade while the names of Canada and Great Britain shall last. We have all the glory we want, all we need to carry our names down through the sounding ages to eternity, but it is not worth while fighting for an additional day for more glory. Nor do we fight for revenge. I do not even think France wants to fight another day in revenge for the great outrage wrought upon her by Germany some 40 years ago. But, gentlemen, we must look facts in the face. We cannot disregard the great, outstanding, stupendous fact of the injuries done to unoffending small nations. You may forget Belgium but you cannot change its race today. Her little homesteads are desolated and empty of women and of children, many of whom have been outraged and slain. I have talked to them and know the truth of what I say. And although many of the tales which have been circulated may be untrue, there is no tale of outrage, however horrible, that has not been paralleled in actual fact. Those outrages lie heavily on the towns and cities of that country and on all the hearts of that noble people and that fact has to be dealt with by any group of men assembled for the purpose of discussing the terms of peace. REPARATION is the first thing which must be accomplished before we can even think of peace. How God can remain God to us if we do not believe in justice I cannot see....

Unless we have a sincere conviction well established and securely founded, that the man no longer cherishes in his heart a hope of world dominion, we cannot discuss the terms of peace. And further, unless we have some definite and distinct belief that the Kaiser and his fighting men have given us their confidence in militarism as an empire-building power, we cannot talk peace with them. We must have from them some definite evidence, first, that they no longer cherish the pan-German dream of world-empire over-riding all rights of nations. Could we but obtain some definite proof or such change of heart we would be willing to talk peace right away, and oh, how gladly, for we loathe this war, those men on the front line trenches loathe it, loathe it with all their hearts and souls. We are not warriors. We are home-loving citizens who want to get home, but first we are men of honour and men of sense, and honour demands and sense compels us to stay at our posts until our work is done, until victory is achieved, until peace is secure.¹⁸⁷

In addition to his unwavering belief in a secure peace, Gordon dismissed the exaggeration of certain atrocities from Belgium, suggesting that others were under-reported. It would seem Gordon understood the context in which he spoke,

¹⁸⁷ Charles W. Gordon, *Address to Empire Club of Toronto*, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/canada_war/gordon/Website/Box%2029/Folder14-Addresses_War/EmpireClubToronto_1917-Jan-25_pg06.shtml (accessed 13 June 2005).

he knew what was at stake and knowing that, fully believed justice would have to be served if this war was to be a righteous one.

For some Presbyterians loathing the war meant careful consideration of what the war truly meant to the Christian conscience. The General Assembly's Commission on the War was made up of several leading theologians from Presbyterian colleges¹⁸⁸ and its purpose was to provide Presbyterians in Canada with "reflections and suggestions" in a time of "severe testing and trial."¹⁸⁹ The commission issued a statement in June of 1917 called "The War and the Christian Church." The statement shifted from placing the blame for the war on the shoulders of the Prussian ruling caste; instead it acknowledged Germany's sins but also blamed, "the sin of modern civilization as represented by Great Britain, France, Canada and the United States of America."¹⁹⁰ These nations were sinners because "the peace they enjoyed before the war was a covering spread over fiercest internecine strife."¹⁹¹ The concept of national sin was not new to Presbyterian dialogue, but this clearly deflected emphasis from German responsibility. The document continued in reference to sin, "the Hope of the human race, which has sinned so grievously and has been so awfully afflicted."¹⁹² This statement exemplifies the struggle the Presbyterians experienced as they tried to continually meet the spiritual needs brought on by the war. The full text of the statement (see Appendix C) suggests that the statement emphasized

¹⁸⁸ Marshall, 161.

¹⁸⁹ Reverend Professor T.B. Kilpatrick, *The War and the Christian Church*, prepared for the General Assembly's Commission on The War and The Spiritual Life of The Church, 1917 3. For full text see Appendix C.

¹⁹⁰ Kilpatrick, 6.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 7.

suffering and redemption in an effort to show those questioning their faith that God was suffering also. David Marshall suggests that since Presbyterians have an acute awareness of sin and God's providence "Presbyterians were able to consider what the war meant without having the foundations of their religious beliefs brought into complete question."¹⁹³ The statement also suggests that the war was a turning point, a time of testing on the road to the social reform hoped for by many Presbyterians.

Sin and disease, ignorance and poverty, stand out conspicuously as such enemies of God, and against them the Church must wage unending war. The battlefield is far extended and includes Parliament House, Court of law, street and market, villa and slum. There can be no rest for the Church as long as any part of the territory of human life remains in the hands of the enemy.

One of the deepest lessons of the War is this: that Salvation means Service, and that service in such a world as this, always means a cross, and it may be even the supreme sacrifice of life itself.¹⁹⁴

A member of the Commission on the War suggested that the conflict sparked renewed interest in the hope of eternal life.¹⁹⁵ This was apparent in the Easter 1917 edition of the *Witness* which restated the need for Christians to reconcile death as a basic reality of Christianity:

If death closed forever the drama of our earthly existence, then such words as honor, love, patriotism, truth, freedom, duty would be meaningless terms and there could be no warrant to throw our lives away for any such empty shadows. It is because we believe that the earthly life is but a brief moment of our existence and that what we call death is the portal of life which is life indeed, that we are reconciled to give up our loved ones to die in a just and holy cause.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Marshall, 163.

¹⁹⁴ Kilpatrick, 12.

¹⁹⁵ Marshall, 163.

¹⁹⁶ Dr. George S. Carson (ed.), "Easter and the War", *Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: Saturday 7 April 1917) 4.

The notion that eternal salvation was the reward for a faithful life lived brought comfort to many Christians at home in Canada. The *Record* felt the need in August 1917 to clarify that these messages of hope were for believers.

A recent sermon ‘somewhere in Canada’, had as one of its leading thoughts in substance, this, that soldiers at the front, by their bravery and unselfish sacrifice are saved.

While no words can do justice to the heroism and self-denial of the men who have risked and sacrificed so much, yet the attempt to glorify their self-denial by such teaching as the above, is wrong in itself and can only be evil in its results. Such teaching takes no account of a man’s past or present or future attitude towards God.

Many soldiers are Christians. They know their own unworthiness. They know whom they have believed, They trust not to their own sacrifice but to the sacrifice of Christ. But many of them, splendid men, are not Christians and do not claim to be, and to lead even one of these to rest in slightest upon any other foundation, instead of pointing him to Christ as his only hope and trust does that soldier an infinite wrong.¹⁹⁷

There was to be no comfort brought to those at home who believed that because their husbands and sons made the ultimate sacrifice that they had been saved. The country could not come to rely on the fact it was a nominally Christian nation in order to get through the war. It was not simply sacrifice that was rewarded with eternal salvation but a soldier’s true faith in God that brought him home.

During the second half of 1917 new proposals for a compromise peace were put forward by the Vatican as well as President Wilson and other prominent individuals. All such plans for peace short of victory meant compromising with Germany’s military power and accepting some degree of German control over its

¹⁹⁷ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “False Teaching”, *Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: August 1917) 226.

European conquests. Canadian Presbyterians were counseled against such proposals because “Peace is not the greatest thing in the world. Truth and Right are greater.”¹⁹⁸ Towards the end of the year, the uncertain fate of the Russian war effort as a result of the revolution in 1917 and the prospect of a separate Russian peace with Germany meant that the requirements for a lasting peace became a mainstay in Presbyterian periodicals. The secular newspapers at this time paid particular attention to the proposals of the British politician and former Governor-General of Canada, Lord Lansdowne. Lord Lansdowne held several important posts including War Secretary in 1895 and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1899 at the time of the Boer War. In 1917 Lord Lansdowne was a Conservative Member of Parliament in the Liberal Coalition government and his proposals were considered divergent from the views of the cabinet. These proposals, contained in a letter written to the *Daily Telegraph* and published on 29 November 1917, suggested that the war aims of the Entente and the US should be revised and coordinated to bring a negotiated peace closer to reality.¹⁹⁹ Lansdowne was condemned by the *Globe* as a defeatist and “pacifist.”²⁰⁰ The reaction of the *Globe* to Lansdowne’s peace proposals were similar to the church periodicals’ response to other peace proposals. Presbyterians believed that as they did not seek the war peace could only be achieved under conditions which would ensure the

¹⁹⁸ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), “Concerning Peace”, *The Presbyterian Record*, (Montreal: November 1917), 321.

¹⁹⁹ “Bad Time for Pacifist Talk”, *The Globe*, Toronto: 1 December 1917, news section 4.

²⁰⁰ *The Globe*, 31 December 1917, edition front page

world's liberties and freedoms were secured.²⁰¹ This view was summarized in the November 1917 edition of the *Record*.

The world today longs for Peace as never before. That longing naturally leads to plans and proposals for securing Peace. The Pope, Ex-President Elliott of Harvard, and many another more or less widely known have issued their recipes for Peace. It is ever thus. For all physical ills there are "sure cures." And the present world ill has its curists, who usually make up in self confidence what they lack in knowledge and experience....Germany wants Peace. She finds herself unable at present to carry out her plan of bringing the world in bondage to her feet, and she wants Peace to recruit for another drive towards her goal. Austria and Turkey want Peace, for they are beginning to see themselves as losers, and likely to continue so, no matter what the issue. The Allied Nations want Peace because they love it and hate war, and because of the sacrifice and suffering and death.

But as they did not seek war, and clung to Peace, as long as it was possible, until driven to war to preserve their rights and liberties, and to secure freedom and safety for their children; so now they can only accept Peace under right conditions, when those rights and liberties and that freedom and safety are secured.²⁰²

Again and again during the course of 1917 several Presbyterian sources outlined the proposals for peace, acknowledged the desire for peace and an end to war but emphatically refused to accept terms that did not ensure the security of the Empire and a lasting peace for the world that could be achieved only through the elimination of Germany's anti-Christian militarism. In January 1917 the *Record* stated:

The Gospel of the Superhuman has long been overshadowed in Germany by the Gospel of the superman. She has learned to write 'God is Power' instead of 'God is Love.' She has rejected the one, and the other she worships and serves. Between god and God is the conflict for world control.²⁰³

²⁰¹ Ibid., 321.

²⁰² Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "Concerning Peace", (Montreal: November 1917).

²⁰³ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "The New Year", (Montreal: January 1917).

This idea continued right through the year, in August 1917 the *Record* commented:

One fact is that it is a case of victory or death. Germany is fighting for world supremacy. The Allies are fighting for world liberty. These principles cannot live together....The war is not merely a conflict between nations, but between right and wrong, between God and the Adversary, between the Kingdom of light and the Kingdom of darkness.

A fact that only a few people even yet have realized is the extent to which departure from God was a part of the more than forty years' preparation of Germany for this war. His Word had largely ceased to be the 'Word of God.' The Gospel of Right had gradually given way to the Gospel of Might, sinful man to the superman.²⁰⁴

As a profoundly Christian country, many Canadians found the notion of the state as supreme and the utmost power unsettling. The anti-Christian teachings of the Prussian military caste not only appeared as a threat to Christendom itself, but was perhaps an indication that the German people were unable to practice freely Christianity in a way that Canadian Presbyterians understood.

Achievement of an effective and lasting peace meant continuing the war until those freedoms as well as justice and security were ensured. Thus, the other major issue that galvanized Canada's secular press in 1917 was conscription. In May Prime Minister Borden announced his intention to introduce a conscription bill. Although papers in June 1917 reported on some anti-conscription rallies and riots in cities such as Winnipeg and Sherbrooke²⁰⁵ there was no doubt most English-speaking Canadians supported

²⁰⁴ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "Three Years of War", (Montreal: August 1917).

²⁰⁵ "Anti-Conscription Move in Winnipeg", *The Globe*, Toronto: 30 June 1917, edition front page

conscription.²⁰⁶ Newspaper reports throughout 1917 suggest that Canadians were exposed to stories about the urgent need for soldiers, as few reinforcements were available.²⁰⁷

Discussion of military manpower shortages and the division between English Canada and Quebec appeared in the *Presbyterian* as early as August 1916. The editor of *Le Devoir*, Quebec nationalist Henri Bourassa, defended low recruitment numbers in Quebec, while editors at the *Presbyterian* defended the English Canadian view. On 11 August the *Globe* reprinted Bourassa's remarks which described English Canadians as "not yet decided whether their allegiance is in Canada or to the Empire, whether the United Kingdom or the Canadian Confederacy is their country."²⁰⁸ On 17 August 1916 the *Presbyterian* offered the following commentary:

Mr. Bourassa does not estimate, as Anglo-Canadians do, the value of the British Empire and of citizenship in it. It is not merely a question of military defence, much less of participation in aggressive war....In the Empire, constituted as it is on the basis of unity combined with freedom, we have a model, rough as yet but slowly being perfected, of a plan for the future federation of the world. We believe that our Empire has a mission and that it is worth preserving. And the fact that Canadians believe that, and believe also that the Empire and what it stands for are in peril, is one reason why they are taking part in the great war.²⁰⁹

As the debates over conscription continued throughout 1917, Presbyterians wholeheartedly embraced the idea of conscription in their periodicals and in a resolution of the General Assembly:

²⁰⁶ Terry Copp, "The Military Effort 1914-1918", *Canada and the First World War: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown*, ed. David MacKenzie, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 55. Most of the Liberal candidates in the December 1917 election endorsed conscription as did the victorious Unionist candidates.

²⁰⁷ "Urgent Need For Infantry", *The Globe*, Toronto: 30 November 1917, edition front page.

²⁰⁸ "Bourassa's Defence of Quebec", *The Globe*, Toronto: 11 August 1916 News section 4.

²⁰⁹ Robert Haddow (ed.), "French Canadian and the War", *The Presbyterian*, (Toronto: 17 August 1916).

The Assembly desires to express its approval of every legitimate effort to rouse the laggards among the youth of Canada to a consciousness of duty and to enroll those who are available as soldiers in a great crusade for the world's freedom.²¹⁰

The *Witness* also came out in support of conscription after hearing Major Andrew Macphail, a physician who would in 1918 become Sir Andrew Macphail, the former editor of McGill's *University Magazine* and the founder and first editor of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, explain how the Canadian Expeditionary Force was desperately in need of reinforcements because of the sheer volume of casualties at the front.²¹¹ The *Witness*, in fact declared that credence should be given to MacPhail because he was not a politician. "Canada must not retire from the conflict until the monstrous ogre of Prussian militarism is laid helpless in the dust."²¹² MacPhail would go on to write the official history of the Medical Services of the Canadian Forces in the First World War.²¹³ The *Record* added to the conscription argument and put it into a Christian context:

Is it right to fight? Yes, it is right to fight wrong. 'Resist the devil' is a command of Scripture, and he is in all wrong. Wrong is of varied kinds, and each kind has to be fought after its kind.

The first line trenches of Canada's liberty are in France and Flanders. Our liberties are there most easily and surely maintained. If lost there they could not be maintained here. If youth and strength that shares the safety of our country will not take its share of responsibility for maintaining that

²¹⁰ Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-Third General Assembly, Montreal, Quebec 6-14 June 1917, 37.

²¹¹ "The Tragedy of Delay", *The Presbyterian Witness*, Halifax: 1 December 1917

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Andrew MacPhail was a controversial and outspoken character known for his embodiment of his Scottish Protestant heritage, for more information on him please see <www.islandregister.com/aboutsir.html> (accessed August 1, 2005). For more information on the controversy surrounding the official history see <www.warchronicle.com/canada/official_history.htm#Medical> (accessed August 1, 2005)

safety, then the only thing, as with all other national burdens, as with taxation, etc., is that it should be compelled to take its share.

Others have no right to suffer for the safety of one who is as strong as they are, while he enjoys that safety at home. Compulsory military service is as just and right as compulsory taxation of any kind.²¹⁴

Presbyterian support for conscription manifested itself in support for the Union government at the polls on 17 December 1917. However, the Church's decision to support conscription did not mean that it had abandoned the quest to persuade the faithful that eternal salvation was found through Jesus Christ.

Compulsory military service was one response to much of the death and destruction of the earlier years of the war. Mandatory service meant those at the front would continue to be supported and replaced by able-bodied men. The news media in 1918 continued to report on the Military Service Act which came into force after the victory of the Unionist Government in December 1917. These reports included news of draftees reporting for military service and "the campaign to catch defaulters."²¹⁵ The 30 March 1918 edition of the *Globe* told Canadians of the disruption and mayhem caused by members of a mob in Quebec City allegedly trying to destroy exemption records.²¹⁶ In addition came reports that 75 people, mostly women and children, were killed when a German shell hit a Paris church during Good Friday services.²¹⁷ The beginning of the last German offensive of the war in March 1918 was also discussed. Although it had originally been decided that men would be exempt from mandatory service to work on farms, the Canadian Prime Minister Borden decided that given the renewed threat of a

²¹⁴ "Save, Give, Fight, Pray", *The Presbyterian Record*. Toronto: December, 1917 357.

²¹⁵ Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 163.

²¹⁶ "Quebec Mob Quelled by Soldiers", *The Globe*, Toronto: 30 March 1918, edition front page

²¹⁷ "75 Killed in Paris Church", *The Globe*, Toronto: 30 March 1918, edition front page

German victory the need of the army was greater. This decision sparked intense debate.²¹⁸ It was in this environment of war-weariness that the Presbyterian press came to discuss such issues as the length of the war and the need to examine individual sin and the righteousness of the conflict. The words of Jesus which were examined early on in the war were discussed again and the notions that the war would strengthen Christianity or bring about some sort of Christian revival were all argued. The prolonged nature of the war also led the Presbyterian press to address why Britain went to war, and why, if the Allies and Canadians were on the side of God, was the war continuing?

The implementation of mandatory service raised the issue of conscientious objectors, most of whom based their refusal to serve on the words of Christ. Editors of the *Presbyterian and Westminster* (owned by the same company, the two publications had merged by this time) clarified the Presbyterian position on Christian based conscientious objection in a 21 March 1918 editorial,

In a war like the present, it is extremely difficult for the so-called “conscientious objector” to maintain his ground. Whatever interpretation may be given of the injunction to ‘turn the other cheek’, however it may be possible to argue in favor of submission rather than opposition to violence when one’s own person and rights are concerned, it is surely impossible to make out a case for non-resistance on Christian grounds when we are dealing with the defence of others. And the latter is really the fundamental issue for the British people in the present war.²¹⁹

The editorial explained that Christ’s words should be taken literally only in the context of daily dealings with one’s neighbour as would have been meant at the time when Christ spoke the words. If, however, someone was weak and in need of assistance then the literal interpretation of turning the other cheek lost its

²¹⁸ Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 177.

²¹⁹ *The Presbyterian and Westminster* “Christianity and War” Toronto: 21 March 1918

relevance. In 1918 the *Presbyterian and Westminster* suggested that whatever interpretations were given to the literal words of Jesus, it was the higher Christian duty to defend others, which was the fundamental reason why Britain and her allies had gone to war. Those who chose to support the war did not do it in spite of the words of Christ, quite the reverse. Presbyterians, after careful analysis of the meaning and context of those words, believed they were obliged to support the war.

The denominational press reminded readers that individuals had a responsibility to strengthen their faith, but Presbyterians interpreted the role of the individual in personal salvation and in the much larger issues raised by the war in different ways. A.B. Fletcher of Truro, Nova Scotia in a letter published in the *Witness* was uncompromising in his view that personal salvation was the only route to victory:

If the sin of an individual or the sin of a number of individuals of the humbler walks of life is fraught with such danger to the State, how must the Just and Holy God view the sins of rulers of nations? Let it not be forgotten that we who belong to the British Empire make our rulers and therefore must be held responsible for their deeds. The War will cease when the heinous sins of which the nations are guilty are repented of and forsaken.²²⁰

Editorials in the *Record* and the *Presbyterian* were only somewhat more nuanced about the relationship between personal faith and the course of international events.

Suppose that God were today to intervene in this awful struggle, and in one of a number of ways that might be named were to bring victory to the Allies, would the world be what He would like it to be. To go no farther a

²²⁰ A.B. Fletcher, Letter to the Editor, *The Presbyterian Witness*, 1918 Halifax, Nova Scotia,

field, is our own country what God wishes it to be? Is our own Church what He wishes it to be? Are our homes what He would like them to be? Are our individual lives what He would like them to be?²²¹

Towering high above all the social, political, ecclesiastical and industrial issues upon which men unite or divide there is the supreme question of the personal relation to Jesus Christ. The fact of Christ faces every man, and to Him every man must stand in the relation either of opposition and antagonism or of obedience and service. There is no neutral ground.²²²

The need to strengthen the role of Christianity in the daily lives of Canadians was an important part of what would come with the potential termination of the war and the peace that would prevail afterwards. The Presbyterian press paid attention to the religious and theological needs after the war, with emphasis being on the country turning towards God. The Church believed that if all turned towards God there would be no more war, and the shameful conditions that had existed prior to the outbreak of the war would not recur:

The greatest religious need after the war will be to have a country in a right attitude towards God; honouring Him, His word, His day, His laws; to have a people imbued with His ideals, filled with His Spirit, seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness.²²³

In the same month the *Presbyterian and Westminster* stated;

But when the war ends and peace is declared on terms that are just to all, we shall not have fulfilled all our obligations to the dead. The men who sleep in Flanders fields died for their country's sake. They died to keep it free, that we who remain might continue to enjoy the rights and liberties that have long been ours. And thus Canada has been consecrated. Must we not feel that our country is something far more sacred inasmuch as it has been saved by the sacrifice of so many lives?... May we see among us a

²²¹ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, Montreal: April 1918, 98.

²²² Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, "The Supreme Question", Toronto: 2 May 1918

²²³ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "Religious Needs After The War", Montreal: February 1918

return to simpler living, and a revival of that Christian faith which makes men less concerned for personal gain than for the common good.²²⁴

And a Letter to the Editor of the same publication suggested a return to God;

This awful war is not an accident. There is a purpose. We are not yet prepared for peace. The war would be in vain if peace came now. As individuals and as a nation, we must humble ourselves and return to Him who holds our destiny in His hand.²²⁵

War Weariness

The notion that war was not an accident and had a purpose led Presbyterians to question why if they were on the side of God and right did the bloody battles and their accompanying death and destruction continue? In response the denominational press continued to emphasize the righteousness of the cause, that no person could know God's plan, and reiterated the key distinction between being on the side of God, as the Allies were, and the arrogant belief that God was on the Allied side. Presbyterians like all Christians in peacetime or wartime hoped they were doing right by God. The unwillingness to state that God was on the Allied side recognized that Presbyterians knew there was a chance they were wrong. The *Record* stated, "the result is entirely in His hands, and that result, being in His hands, must be a right one. And yet, on the whole, is He not less considered than any other important factor in this great world struggle?"²²⁶

The *Presbyterian and Westminster* suggested:

It is the question we are asking. All our best sensibilities have been outraged by the manner in which Germany has appropriated God, and credited Him with participation in the most diabolical acts. We cannot

²²⁴ Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, "Keeping Faith with Our Dead", Toronto: 7 February 1918

²²⁵ R.G. Marshall, "Return to God", Letter to the Editor in *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, Toronto, Ontario 7 March 1918 232.

²²⁶ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "God on War", Montreal: April 1918 4.

accept their conclusions, but we have been frankly perplexed. “Why does God not declare Himself?” “Is He for us or for our adversaries?” It is time we knew the best or the worst.

The fact is, God belongs neither to Germany nor to the Allies. He stands for righteousness and truth in the earth. We cannot hope to bring Him over to our side. All that we can do and the best that we can do is to come over to His side. Great as German atrocities have been, our hope of Divine aid must rest eventually not on their unrighteousness, but on our own righteousness.²²⁷

The frequent discussion about the righteousness of the allied role in the conflict was perhaps an indication that Presbyterians were becoming weary of the prolonged battles and unrelenting death and sorrow. At this time when the average Presbyterian was sick of the conflict and destruction, the denominational press stepped in to assure that the fatigue would not lend its readers to support an insecure and early peace.

In order to demonstrate the just nature of the allied role in the war, the *Presbyterian and Westminster* used a memorandum written by Prince Lichnowsky, the former German Ambassador to Britain to remind readers that Britain did its utmost to prevent the war and that the war was forced upon the Allies.

The question which Christian people ought to be most concerned about in connection with the war is the question of right and wrong. Are we justified in the sight of God for taking part in this terrible conflict? Is the responsibility for launching this devastating curse upon the world ours or our enemy's? As President Lincoln said, what matters is not so much to be sure that God is on our side as to be sure that we are on God's side. Probably nothing that has been published since the outbreak of the war throws more light upon questions of this kind than the memorandum written by Prince Lichnowsky, the former German Ambassador to Britain, which has recently been printed for the first time. In this memorandum, which was intended originally only for private circulation, Prince Lichnowsky, writing out of an intimate knowledge of the British policy, and especially of the policy and sentiments of men like Premier Asquith

²²⁷ Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, “On Which Side is God To-Day?” (Toronto: 18 July 1918)

and Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, fixes the guilt for the war firmly upon his own Government. He shows that war was forced upon the Allies, and that the Government of Britain at least, so far from willing the war, did everything that was humanly possible to prevent it. The rulers of Germany, beyond a doubt, were the breakers of the peace.²²⁸

In March 1918 the editor of the *Witness* warned readers to “Stand Fast” and addressed the war-weariness experienced on the home front in the context of reaffirming the righteousness of the conflict, restating the threat posed to Christianity by German militarism and cautioning against a premature peace.

A general war weariness, in which all the nations are sharing, is creeping over our people, affecting to some extent the resolution of some and inclining them to considerations of peace on almost any terms. There is danger of the morale of the nation weakening as the effects of the war at home become more accentuated....

That which was right three years ago is not wrong today. A duty which was imperative when a small nation was ruthlessly ravaged by a powerful and unprincipled military organization and the liberties of the whole world threatened, is no less a duty today when this same infamous sea of war-lords continue to struggle for the domination of the world...

...it is pre-eminently a struggle between the forces of truth and right on the one side, and the powers of falsehood, tyranny and ambition on the other. Not only our liberty but our civilization and our Christianity are in peril....

We ought not, of course, to underestimate the fortitude of the German people in the midst of sufferings far greater than ours, a fortitude to a large extent inspired and sustained by misrepresentation and deception on the part of the military authorities with regard to the origin and object of the war.²²⁹

Part of this war weariness was the constant need to deal with death, the killing never stopped and the *Witness* took advantage of Easter in 1918, with its obvious message of

²²⁸ Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, “The Breakers of the Peace”, (Toronto: 11 April 1918)

²²⁹ Reverend George S. Carson (ed.), “Stand Fast”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 9 March 1918), 4.

salvation and resurrection from death, to bring messages of comfort to those who were coming to terms with death,

No disappointments or seeming calamities can overwhelm the soul that is staid on God, for to him what we call death is only an incident in the continuous life of the spirit. The spirit leaves the material body and lives on and enters new scenes of action. If one looks back, death is the end of a career, an experience of life.²³⁰

Despite the hope of eternal salvation for the faithful the sorrow did not stop. In June 1918 the Canadian hospital ship Llandovery Castle was torpedoed by a German submarine and memorial services were held for the dead. Ian Miller quotes the response of the Reverend Dr. J.W. McMillan of Toronto's St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, "we are the true pacifists, because we will have peace at any price. They will not pay the price of war." This ironic message of endurance by a Presbyterian minister, in response to the sinking, was reiterated in a major Toronto daily, *The Mail and Empire*.²³¹

At this same time the secular press reported Lord Lansdowne's new letter demanding an early and negotiated peace settlement. The 1 August 1918 edition of the *Globe* suggested, "He dwells on the tragic loss of life and declares that his desire for peace is widespread among enemy nations."²³² On the following day the *Globe* reported the headlines of the British press, "the Writer Represents No One Except Himself", "Would Sup with Devil" and "British Public Does Not Forget the Crimes and Brutality of German."²³³ On 10 September 1918 the *Globe* reported that the main Toronto

²³⁰ Reverend George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, "In the Morning", (Halifax : March 1918), 4.

²³¹ Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief*, 177.

²³² "Demands Basis to Make Peace", *The Globe*, Toronto: 1 August 1918 edition front page and news section page 5.

²³³ "No Heed Paid to Lansdowne", *The Globe*, Toronto: 2 August 1918, edition front page.

thoroughfare of Lansdowne Ave. might have its name changed as a result of the remarks of Lord Lansdowne. “Will the utterances of Lord Lansdowne so incense the residents of Lansdowne Avenue, Toronto, that they will have to vote to have the street renamed Jutland Avenue?”²³⁴

In an effort to curb the growing fatigue with the war and its effects, the denominational press denounced any notion of a peace that was negotiated before the principles for which so many Canadians and Presbyterians went to war were met. The June 1918 *Record* forcefully restated its well established position that peace without victory would be wrong.

That our part in it is right was, at the beginning, clear as noonday, and it has grown clearer with each succeeding year to an ever-widening circle, as the character of German aims and methods has been more fully revealed in all its blackness of treachery, hypocrisy, falsehood, cruelty, brutality and wrong.

Hence it follows that any suggestion to cease warring against that evil – so long as it remains – is wrong. To be at peace with evil-doing is to share in that evil-doing. To consent with a thief or a murderer is to assume complicity in his guilt. To cease fighting the German wrong, while that wrong remains, is to be partner in the wrong. In ‘pacifism’ we become shares with Germany in her guilt. Such pacifism is a crime against humanity and against God.²³⁵

On 10 August 1918, the *Witness* reacted to Lord Lansdowne’s peace proposal with indignation:

We wonder with whom this pacifist peer expects the British Government and the Governments of the Allied nations to negotiate. Does he imagine that men of any self respect, men capable of moral indignation, men who abhor falsehood and treachery and baseness as deep as the bottomless pit, could sit in council with a hand of infamous rascals – the murderers of the

²³⁴ “Take Poll on Street Name”, *The Globe*, Toronto: 10 September 1918, news section page 9.

²³⁵ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, “Three War Questions”, (Montreal: June 1918).

innocent and the defenceless, the violators of the most sacred things of life and the responsible instigators of a long list of unspeakable crimes?

This is why we say there must be no compromise now, in this final stage of the war, when the enemy is drawing near the end of his resources and the prospect of defeat faces him on every side, and when the fruit of our unspeakable sacrifices is coming daily nearer within our reach. This is why we need to stiffen our resolution, to forget our war-weariness and to reinforce our faith and our fortitude to endure unto the end. We have no misgivings as to the justice of our cause.²³⁶

Those believers who wanted a quick end to the conflict were reminded of their responsibility to remove the Prussian leadership and return Germany to God. The *Record* in August 1918, published the thoroughly nationalist and unchristian vow taken by men who entered the ministry of the Established Church of Prussia:

I will be submissive, faithful and obedient to his Royal Majesty, and his lawful successors in the government, as my most gracious king and sovereign; promote his welfare according to my ability; prevent injury and detriment to him; and particularly endeavor carefully to cultivate in the minds of the people under my care a sense of reverence and fidelity toward the king, love for the fatherland, obedience to the laws, and all those virtues which in a Christian denote a good citizen; and I will not suffer any man to teach or act in a contrary spirit. In particular, I vow that I will not support any society or association, either at home or abroad, which might endanger the public security, and will inform his majesty of any proposals made, either in my diocese or elsewhere, which might prove injurious to the State. I will preach the Word as his gracious majesty dictates.²³⁷

The *Record* highlighted the blasphemy of the last line that put the Kaiser before God.²³⁸ The vow was certainly more autocratic than the oaths Presbyterians would have understood. Presbyterians might have been familiar with the 1559 Oath of

²³⁶ Reverend George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, “No Compromise”, (Halifax: 10 August 1918).

²³⁷ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, “The Kaiser’s Preachers”, (Montreal: August 1918), 225-226.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 226.

Supremacy in which Anglican priests pledge allegiance to the Church of England and recognized the Monarch's sole authority over the Church.²³⁹ However that provision, served exclude Papal authority and in no way suggests that the monarch would influence the church to the extent the Kaiser intended. Presbyterians believe that Jesus Christ is the only King and head of the Church.²⁴⁰ The *Record* suggested that the vow signified a closed society in which the Christian church was unable to teach freely.

The fact of such a vow and its keeping makes the case of Germany more hopeless than if such utterances were the free expression of the preachers' convictions, for then there would be at least spiritual independence....But when intellectual life is gone, when the soul is gone, and ignorant and educated alike surrender the will, the intelligence, give themselves up, not merely to bodily but to intellectual and spiritual slavery; then is the prospect dark.²⁴¹

The first few months of 1918 were characterized by a national war-weariness that the denominational press felt compelled to address. The arguments used to remind readers of the righteousness of the cause and the threat of German militarism were not unlike those expressed in the early days of the war. The need to re-emphasize these points however, took on a desperate character as the Presbyterian press found themselves competing with war-fatigue. The Presbyterian publications did everything they could to ensure their readers would not support a premature peace. The views and opinions expressed by the Presbyterian journals in the final year of war and first year of peace

²³⁹ Jokinen, Anniina. "Oath of Supremacy." *Luminarium*. 1 May 2005.
<<http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/supremacy.htm>>

²⁴⁰ Presbyterians Who We Are, "Our Church Government",
<www.presbycan.ca/whoweare/government.html>, (last accessed 1 August 2005).

²⁴¹ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "The Kaiser's Preachers", (Montreal: August 1918), 226.

continued to reflect the discussion found in the secular papers. Amongst the stories told in the country's secular papers one of the most important for all Canadians was the mounting deaths associated with the war, particularly the large losses experienced by the Canadian Corps in the last one hundred days of the war, where approximately 20% of all Canadian casualties occurred.²⁴² Although the losses for the period were tempered by significant territorial gains, the heavy fighting and Canadian casualties were still reported. On 2 September 1918 the *Globe* reported on the Canadian push towards the Queant-Drocourt line suggesting, "recent operations have not provided a more bitter struggle of infantry..."²⁴³ and two days later, "this is no runaway victory. Every inch of the ground is being sharply contested. The enemy relies primarily on machine-gun nests supported by heavy artillery. It is these that have occasioned our worst and heaviest casualties."²⁴⁴ As the war neared its end, Canadians would begin to reflect on the previous four years and try to understand the meaning of it all. As part of this reflection Presbyterians would find themselves reconciling their faith with the staggering amount of young lives lost. The terms of any peace agreement would have to reflect the values of liberty, righteousness and justice. After all, these were the values for which many Presbyterians believed the war was fought.

²⁴² Rawling, 221

²⁴³ "Canadians Win in Hard Fight", *The Globe*, Toronto: 2 September 1918, front page.

²⁴⁴ "Canadians Take Nearly 6,000 Huns in Intensive, Sanguinary Fighting", *The Globe*, Toronto: 2 September 1918, edition front page.

Chapter Three: The End of War and Peace

“Germany Throws Up Her Hands”, was the headline in the 11 November 1918 *Globe* as the armistice was announced across Canada. The newspaper quoted British Prime Minister Lloyd George, “terms will be just, but must prevent such wantonness again...”²⁴⁵ In the months prior to the armistice, debate ensued between British politicians and the commander of the allied armies on the Western Front, General Foch, as to the terms to be imposed on Germany. Foch believed the Germans would accept any military terms, however the British Ministers believed the Germans were not desperate enough to agree to unconditional surrender.²⁴⁶ In addition Field Marshall Haig believed that it would be a gamble to impose unnecessarily severe terms²⁴⁷ on Germany and believed that allied occupation of Germany would be far too costly to the allied armies.

Concerns over a return to German militarism and belief that in victory the British Empire represented the best hopes for peace dominated the *Globe* in December 1918. The paper also reiterated how important British naval supremacy was for peace, “Seas are Free Because Britain Rules Waves,”²⁴⁸ declared a headline in the *Globe*. It was in this atmosphere that the Presbyterian press discussed such issues as a meaningful and just peace, the righteousness of the conflict and the challenges faced by Christians in Germany.

²⁴⁵ “Germany Throws Up Her Hands, *The Globe*, Toronto: 11 November 1918, edition front page.

²⁴⁶ Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *Great Britain and the War of 1914-1918* (London: Methuen & Co. 1967) 424.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ “Real ‘Freedom of Seas’ Assured By British Navy”, *The Globe*, Toronto: 4 December 1918 edition front page.

The Kaiser William is, in his way, a religious man and he thought because he called on God and honored Him in words that God would be with him. But God is always on the side of right; and with all their shortcoming and imperfection the Allies were right in this war. And so God put into their hearts a strength that could not be broken: He gave them patience to endure through days of defeat and discouragement until the tide was turned and victory came.²⁴⁹

The Kaiser lacked humility and assumed an all powerful Germany was part of God's plan. The Kaiser's arrogance and lack of true faith was his demise. Simply saying the words was not true faith. One must believe it in their heart. According to the *Presbyterian and Westminster* the Kaiser by his actions proved he did not have God in his heart. This quote does not necessarily imply that victory was proof of God's intentions, for if good always triumphed over evil then complacency would set in among mankind and there would be no reason to fight. The quote reminded Presbyterians that sometimes evil wins and good people die. If God was in one's heart and one tried to live for God through good deeds then God would grant patience and strength to endure. This endurance resulted in victory.

On the occasion of the armistice in November 1918, the *Witness* explained the role of divine intervention in the Allied victory.

We think it will be generally recognized that the issue of this war is the greatest demonstration of the supremacy of right and the triumph of moral forces which the world has ever seen. Had Germany been successful in carrying out her infamous designs; had her unspeakable atrocities gone unatoned for, even in this world; had truth remained on the scaffold and wrong on the throne, there might have seemed some ground for doubting the moral order of the universe: but the overthrow of the Kaiser and his impious gang of liars and murderers has added another indubitable proof

²⁴⁹ Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, "Looking Backward", (Toronto: 14 November 1918)

that unrighteousness and wrong cannot continue to exist in a world in which God is the Supreme moral Ruler, that ultimately every power, human or satanic, that sets itself against God must go down to ignominious defeat, and that “the nations that forget God shall be turned into hell.”²⁵⁰

For Presbyterians victory was proof that good triumphs over evil eventually. Victory provided assurance that the allies were on the side of God, that ultimately God’s plan for the destiny of the world involved the triumph of good over evil. The importance of God as the Supreme moral ruler was restated reminding readers that Germany had removed God from their beliefs, valuing state power and authority over that of God.

In the Presbyterian view, the allies recognized that good did not necessarily triumph over evil quickly or easily. The long, costly struggle was part of God’s plan. Presbyterians continued to remind themselves that they could not know God’s intentions but victory helped them reconcile the deaths of good people in cause of the ultimate moral triumph. The end of the war raised other questions about death, such as why some men died so close to the end of hostilities and why others survived. Through the medium of the periodical, church leaders tried to address these new questions. The *Witness* provided the following words of wisdom in December 1918,

If His way for some of our boys was that they should finish their work in a few brief and strenuous days, and for others that they should go on to the end of the struggle and then join their brave companions on the other side, we cannot question either His wisdom or His love. He hath done all things well.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), “Jehovah Hath Triumphed”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 16 November 1918), 4.

²⁵¹ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), “In the Wilderness”, *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 7 December 1918) 4.

Despite the fact an Allied victory represented the victory of right over evil, there were still aspects of God's intentions that were not understood, but were accepted as his will. A month prior to the December editorial, Reverend Carson included a passage on the Twenty-Third Psalm by Reverend J.P. MacPhie on the second page of the paper. In the article MacPhie discussed the Psalm and put it into the context of the war:

There is a bright side to the valley of the shadow of death. Note it is not the valley of death, but the *shadow* of death. Glad and happy thought. A shadow cannot hurt me or harm me. The shadow of a serpent cannot sting me. The shadow of a sword cannot kill me. After all, death does not seem to be death, only the appearance of it. Sleep looks like death, is the shadow or picture of it, but it is not death itself. It is possible for a man to be in the valley of the shadow of death and not be afraid.

Today thousands and tens of thousands of our soldier boys are facing death and the enemy in the same fearless spirit, on the battlefields of France, giving up their lives for the safety of the world, counting liberty dearer than life, thus proclaiming their faith in God and in the righteousness of their cause. It is that belief that makes them indifferent to danger and death.²⁵²

The Presbyterian messages of comfort were intended for believers. For those who believed that life began with death it was easier to chose to give one's self for a just cause.

The idea of choosing to sacrifice one's self for a just cause, was used by Presbyterian editors to promote missionary work after the war. The *Record* used this sense of sacrifice and service when it introduced a new campaign called the "Forward Movement":

It is an effort to follow up and carry out the lessons of the war and to conserve whatever of good, in spirit and work, the war may have called forth. The years of war have shown three things: 1....the Gospel of Jesus

²⁵² Reverend J. P. MacPhie, "Three Reasons Why I like The Twenty Third Psalm" *The Presbyterian Witness*, (Halifax: 16 November 1918) 2.

Christ- and that only- can preserve the world's civilization and social order from collapse and ruin.

2. A second thing the war has shown, the sacrifices which men and women will make when they are willing and interested.

3. A third thing the war has thrown into strong relief, viz., how little the Christian world has been doing in the past, in men and money and effort, to leaven humanity with the Gospel, to give the world that which alone can prevent war of all kinds.

And where hundreds of thousands of our young men have so freely and nobly responded to the call of their country, surely if the subject is fairly laid before them, hundreds of our boys and girls will respond to Christ's call and will volunteer for training to serve as ministers, missionaries and deaconesses in winning the world for Christ, enthroning the Prince of Peace.²⁵³

The work of missions after the war was essential. Presbyterian articles throughout the war suggested that a lack of faith both in Germany and at home helped to foment the war. Spreading the word of Christ became a means of achieving lasting peace.

The failure of nations to be dominated by the spirit of Christ was examined in the *Witness* in December 1918. The focus was not the secular nature of Germany but rather the failure of nominally Christian nations to put Christ above militarism.

The very contrast between the spirit of Christmas and that spirit by which the war-loving leaders of Prussian militarism were animated in their assault upon the rights and liberties of free nations should make a deep impression upon every thoughtful mind. We have had an appalling exhibition of the fruits of selfishness, greed and ambition in the world. The present war would have been an impossibility if all the great nations-even the nominally Christian nations-had been dominated by the spirit of Christ. The dark and dreadful past cannot be recalled; but anew today the Gospel of reconciliation, of peace and goodwill, is offered to men, weary with war and bowed beneath their burden of sorrow. A great and a

²⁵³ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, "The Forward Movement", (Montreal: September 1918).

glorious future is open to all who will accept the heavenly message and recognize the sovereignty of the Prince of Peace.²⁵⁴

The Presbyterian press believed that never again should any country put state authority or nationalism as the supreme power, as nothing was greater than God. Even the rise of secularism at home had to be kept in check in order to avoid the rise of narrow nationalism and other anti-Christian behaviour.

While missionary work provided one way of ensuring lasting peace, it was also important that a meaningful peace with Germany ensured justice and security. The December 1918 edition of the *Record* entitled “The Dawn of Peace” provided insight into the concerns of Presbyterians about reaching such peace.

But especially has the war been unequalled in the depths of falsity, treachery and dishonour, - the cruelty, barbarity and inhumanity – of the Germany that forced it upon the world.

Thank God for peace, even though it cannot be a just peace, because any terms, however severe, that the Allies may impose, must still come far short of the just deserts of the criminals and their crimes.²⁵⁵

Christians believe in sin and retribution, and the crimes committed by evil-doers required severe retribution. The determination that punishment was deserved was the only way punishment could be just.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, “The Christmas Message”, (Halifax: 21 December 1918), 4.

²⁵⁵ Dr. Ephraim Scott (ed.), *The Presbyterian Record*, “The Dawn of Peace”, (Montreal: December 1918).

²⁵⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Compelling Reason*, (London:Fount Publishing, 1996) 123. Lewis also states, “To be punished, however severely, because we have deserved it, because we ‘ought to have known better,’ is to be treated as a human person made in God’s image, 128.

Thousands of Canadians had died fighting the evil criminals of the German military caste. In January 1919 the *Globe* reported that the final casualty figures for Canada were 220,182 with deaths numbered at 60,383.²⁵⁷ As the months went on, more soldiers returned home and the country began to reflect on the past four years. Death and its role within Christianity continued to be a major topic of Presbyterian discourse. Perhaps the most poignant message appeared in the February 1919 edition of the *Witness*, Reverend George S. Carson's editorial "Who Are the Dead":

In the face of these solemn and indubitable facts, it is well that we should revise our conceptions of death and see how far the popular imagination is in accord with reality. We speak of those who have fallen on the field of battle as dead, and we associate with this term the idea of loss-not ours alone, but theirs. We think of the brilliant and happy future that was before some of these men in life, and we find it hard to overcome the feeling of regret that they had not been spared to see the end of the war, to share in the joy of victory and to take their part in the building up of a new and better order of things in the world. In the popular mind the dead are those who have dropped out of the great throbbing life of the world and who lie sleeping in lonely graves "where poppies grow"...But this is not the conception of death which has come to us through Christ and His apostles. To our Lord the unseen world was as real and as full of life as that in which we live. He Himself had come from it and was soon to return. He spoke of the heavenly abiding-places and of the holy and happy fellowship of those who dwell in them. He talked to His disciples of His departure as we would speak of a journey and a brief absence from home. To Him there was but one life, though some provinces of it were veiled from human eyes; and He passed beyond our vision that we might better grasp the reality of His continued presence with us.²⁵⁸

A basic part of being Christian is understanding death. All Christians are at different places in their journey with Christ. However it is understood that each individual Christian needs to reconcile death. The war forced Christians to reconcile death sooner than later because it was all around them. The Presbyterian

²⁵⁷ "Total Canadian Casualties 220,182", *The Globe*, 4 January 1919, edition front page.

²⁵⁸ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, "Who are the Dead?", (Halifax :8 February 1919) 4.

leaders recognized the great need to assist members of the Church in facing death and sorrow. This is evident in both *The Presbyterian*, which deemed fear of leaving the earth as a false alarm, and in the sermons of Reverend Eakin who emphasized that the object of man on earth should be to live for the destiny that awaits him. Little however, provided the clarity that Reverend Carson was able to bring to the topic of death and the differences between the popular conception of death and the Christian concept of death. His editorial in the *Presbyterian Witness*, published in early 1919, brought a simple faith to those Christian soldiers returning from war and those Christian families watching all but their own loved ones return.

To know that our loved ones have left us is one of earth's keenest sorrows, but to know that they are beyond the reach of pain and sorrow, to know that they are reunited to long-lost friends, to know that they dwell evermore in the presence of the Lord, and to know that we shall some day be joined with them, brings comfort to sorrowing hearts. Our dead are not friendless and alone; they are with all the loved ones who have crossed the river, and they are without doubt far better off than we.²⁵⁹

As emphasized in the periodicals, it was imperative to understand that it was God's way that some died later in the war while others barely saw action – yet the fundamental importance was that death brought the faithful to a fuller life, albeit an unseen one.

The thousands of deaths that had to be reconciled were, for Presbyterians, deaths in the name of a just cause. Now that the war was over justice and security had to be ensured. The first few months of 1919 saw the slow progress and frequent conflicts among Allied leaders of the Paris Peace Conference detailed in the papers. "Disarmament

²⁵⁹ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, "Who are the Dead?", (Halifax: 8 February 1919), 4.

Essential” and “Milder Terms for Germans: Fear that Bolshevism May Spring from Harshness”²⁶⁰ were amongst the stories in the *Globe*. From the beginning of the year a series of columns called “The Making of Peace” appeared in the *Globe* in March 1919. This coverage tells us that the secular press in Canada was concerned about Germany’s lack of sincerity in terms of demilitarization²⁶¹ and the rise of Bolshevism in parts of Germany such as Bavaria.²⁶² Upon the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919 the *Globe*’s banner headline quoted *Psalm 147: 13-14* “For He Hath strengthened the bars of thy gates...He maketh Peace in they borders.”²⁶³ The headline suggests that the *Globe* recognized the profound Judeo-Christian character of Canadian society and the comfort brought to Canadian society by God who ultimately brings security, peace and order to a chaotic world. The same edition reported that uncertainty about the treaty remained, “Peace has come to the warring world- the peace of the sword. Germany has signed under compulsion, and only by compulsion will she carry out the agreement...”²⁶⁴ The debates over the severity of the terms to imposed on Germany provided the backdrop for denominational writing in 1919.

The *Witness* noted the increasingly secular and apparently unrelenting militarist nature of Germany in February 1919:

A leading Catholic journal, the *Kolnische Volkszeitung*, wrote in the early part of this year: ‘The sinking of the *Lusitania* was a success for our submarines which must be placed beside the greatest achievements in naval warfare. With joyful pride we contemplated this deed of our navy,

²⁶⁰ “Disarmament Essential,” *The Globe*, Toronto: 1 March 1919, edition front page

²⁶¹ “The Making of Peace”, *The Globe*, Toronto: 12 February 1919 edition front page.

²⁶² “Bolshevism...”, *The Globe*, Toronto: 9 April 1919 edition front page.

²⁶³ “For He Hath Strengthened...”, *The Globe*, Toronto: 30 June 1919 edition headline.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30 June 1919, edition front page.

and it was not the last. The moral significance of the event was still greater than the material success,'

And Professor Baumgarten, of Kiel, a Doctor of Divinity, wrote: 'The German who cannot approve from the bottom of his heart the sinking of the *Lusitania* and give himself up to honest joy at this victorious exploit of Germany's defensive power – such a one we deem no true German.'²⁶⁵

These quotes underscored that even the Christian elements of German society were under the influence of bad impulses. That an official organ of the Clerical Party in the Rhine States believed there was joy found in the sinking of the *Lusitania* demonstrated to Presbyterians the need for such forces of evil to receive their just desserts. The same issue of the *Witness* contained more hopeful views in an article reprinted in the *Witness* from *The United Presbyterian*:

Spiritual ideals have not failed. Indeed, they have been lifted into a new supremacy since that fateful August 1914. The whole world has been thinking of the great religious facts with a seriousness that had not been known for many a year. God and love and life and judgment and destiny and atonement and forgiveness through the vicarious sufferings of Jesus, these things have engaged the thought and interest of multitudes who had thought too little about them before.²⁶⁶

In keeping with the revival of Christian ideals such as judgment, atonement and forgiveness, the Presbyterian publications continued to stress the importance of a just and lasting peace. In the 1 March 1919 edition of the *Witness*, the editor, Reverend George S. Carson, attempted to answer concerns that

²⁶⁵ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness* "Is Germany Repentant?", (Halifax: 22 February 1919), 4. The Kolnische Volkszeitung was the organ of the Clerical party in the Prussian Rhine states, this quote was used for propaganda purposes by Britain. It was often included with a copy of the Lusitania medal issued by Britain to replicate a celebratory medal supposedly issued by Germany.

²⁶⁶ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, "The Things That Did Not Fail", (Halifax: 18 January 1919).

Marshal Foch might have made peace too soon and that victory over Germany was being squandered when unconditional surrender should have been imposed.

People who talk in this way have probably not considered what the war was costing us, in life and treasure, but especially the former, every day that it was prolonged, nor perhaps have they fully realized the character and extent of the penalty imposed upon Germany in the armistices to which she has been compelled to submit. It is true that the German armies were on the eve of surrender, and that they could not have held out much longer, but even a few weeks more war would have meant an additional sacrifice of perhaps half a million lives and Marshal Foch, without hesitation, decided that he would not be justified in making such a sacrifice if his end could be attained in any other way. And we think the judgment of the world will sustain him in this decision.²⁶⁷

The ideals of the Paris Peace Conference were dealt with in the 20 February 1919 issue of the *Presbyterian and Westminster*:

Among the men who went to war and those who gave their sons were many thousands whose conviction was that in that great conflict, involving such stupendous sacrifice, they were really fighting against war. The military spirit that takes delight in battle, that seeks to dominate other men by force, that has no regard for any rights but its own, they believed to be incarnated chiefly in Germany, and they were convinced that in order to banish that spirit from the world it was necessary, first of all, that Germany be thoroughly defeated. Victory was not so much an end in itself as a means to an end, the great end being the establishment of a new order to which violence would be replaced by injustice and war by peace.

The war has been fought and won. Germany has been defeated. The task which now confronts the Allied statesmen is to see that all the effort and sacrifice has not been made in vain, that the causes which have produced war in the past are, as far as possible, removed...²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, "Did Foch Make Peace Too Soon?", (Halifax: Nova Scotia, 1 March 1919), 4.

²⁶⁸ Robert Haddow (ed.), *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, "What Did We Fight For?", (Toronto: 20 February 1919).

Prior to the end of the war a Letter to the Editor of the *Presbyterian and Westminster* suggested that to the same degree that the church had supported Britain they should also call for repentance for participation in the sin of the war:

Our pulpits have done a great deal to laud Britain to the skies. It seems to me we would serve our country better if we called more incessantly for repentance. Pray for peace, yes, but bring forth fruits meet for repentance and let the burden of our prayer be, 'Father, forgive me for my share in Calvary and in the bloodshed of Flanders.' Let us say less about the sin of Germany and more about our own.²⁶⁹

Individual sin and repentance was also the topic of an August 1919 edition of the *Witness*:

Jesus said that one of the first fruits of the coming of the Spirit, after His departure would be to convict the world of sin; for He knew that where there is no sense of sin there would be no feeling of the need of a Divine Saviour and consequently no glad acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. Such a deep and nation-wide conviction of sin and determination to turn to God for forgiveness and strength to take up the great tasks before us is our first great need today. The way to national rededication is along the path of repentance for national and personal sin.²⁷⁰

For the editorial staff at the *Witness*, forgiveness could be countenanced only after Germany repented.

The unforgiving spirit which persists in remembering past deeds, and refuses to take account of a new state of mind and character is indeed immoral, because it refuses to look at things as they are. But immoral also, not less dangerously immoral, is the refusal resolutely to face the fact that the wrongdoer is still a wrong-doer, and for various selfish reasons coming to terms of peace with him. The judgments of God are according to truth, and those of righteous men must be so likewise. There is no virtue, but rather immortality, in shutting our eyes to facts.

²⁶⁹ A.R. McRae, "The Obstacle to Peace", Letter to the Editor in *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, Toronto, Ontario, 17 January 1918 p. 70

²⁷⁰ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness*, "A Call to Repentance", (Halifax: 30 August 1918).

Germany, for her own sake, as well as for the security of the nations which she has wronged, must be made to expiate her crimes; and she must bring forth the fruits of repentance before she is again admitted into the fellowship of peace-loving nations.²⁷¹

With these passages the periodicals addressed the virtue of forgiveness both on an individual level and in terms of international relations. It was recognized in both cases that forgiveness was essential to Christianity; in order for Christians to be forgiven, they themselves must forgive. Thus in the same way Christians must kill if necessary, they must not hate. It was their duty to punish but they must not enjoy it.²⁷² Forgiving Germany did not negate the need to punish the enemy, and in the context of the debate over peace terms demonstrating the need for Germany's repentance reinforced the notion that punishment was required.

The *Witness* stressed that nations should be mindful of the reasons why they went to war and to uphold the ideals for which so many made the ultimate sacrifice.

Already the forces of selfishness and greed are asserting themselves with renewed aggressiveness, organized evil has lost none of its old arrogance, and the sacrifices and sorrows of the war have not sobered the thoughtless votaries of pleasure. On every hand the topic of supreme moment seems to be how our victory is to be turned to the material advantage of the conquering nations. The expansion of our trade, the development of new industries- these are the subjects which command the largest measure of popular interest. And yet we have been saying all along that the war was on our part a holy war, a conflict of ideals; that the sacrifices which we were making were for the imperishable things of the spirit, the things of priceless value, without which life itself would not be worth living! Are we to lay aside those lofty ideals, turn our faces away from the heavenly

²⁷¹ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Witness* "In the Hour of Victory", (Halifax: 23 November 1918) 4.

²⁷² C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Harper Collins Edition, 2001)120.

vision and give ourselves up to the sordid pursuit of the baser things now that the war is over?²⁷³

The June 1919 *Witness* reiterated how important it was that man return to God, and in doing so stop worshipping might which, one of the major failings prior to the war:

The darkness of the horizon to-day is due to our imperfect logic during the war, our refusal to push the principles we claimed to be defending further than suited us at the time. If right is right in one field of action, then only right is right in any other. If today men's hearts are largely 'failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth,' it is because most men still believe in and worship might, and therefore cannot trust one another. Mutual trust is the first condition of civilization, in all relations of individuals, or classes, of States; and such trust is possible only when all men worship Right.²⁷⁴

Perhaps already aware that the social reform, hoped for by many Presbyterians as a result of the conflict, might not come to be realized the *Witness* reminded Presbyterians of the Christian values for which the war had been fought.

Sophisticated thought and intellectual rationalization about the agonizing length of the war dominated the periodicals in the last two years of the conflict. As Presbyterians came to terms with the loss and suffering of the previous four years their periodicals attempted to provide comfort and better Christian understanding. They addressed those who suffered loss as well as those who returned home. The question of German secularism was tackled, and the publications in 1919 were able to draw on evidence from Germany itself that this

²⁷³ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *Presbyterian Witness*, "The War After the War", (Halifax: 1 February 1919), 4.

²⁷⁴ Rev. George S. Carson (ed.), *Presbyterian Witness*, "The Right Point of View", (Halifax: 14 June 1919), 4.

fear was in fact a reality. The rise of German secularism and militarism had threatened Christianity in the Presbyterian view. With the armistice and during the Paris Peace Conference the periodicals tried to come to terms with the best way to ensure a lasting peace and reiterated to their readers that the war was fundamentally about achieving peace. The periodicals also took the opportunity to clarify issues of forgiveness and repentance. To this end great emphasis was also put on the ability of the individual and nations to turn to God, and that the war was a result of the worship of other things such as might and materialism rather than God. The articles, editorials and correspondence published between the signing of the armistice in 1918 and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, by Presbyterians for Presbyterians, reveal a community that was capable of developing a complex and thoughtful dialogue, which stayed true to much of the thought developed in the early years of the war. As new problems arose specifically relating to the end of hostilities the periodicals were capable of addressing these issues with well-developed ideas. This period reveals a Presbyterian press that exposed their readers to a variety of ideas for and against pacifism and ideas concerning the best options for peace. The Presbyterian press continued to place the war firmly in the context of defending freedom and the weak.

Conclusion

This study of the ideas expressed in the periodicals published by the Presbyterian Church in Canada demonstrates that Presbyterian leaders understood the war as a struggle fought for a just cause, against an evil enemy and in support of Christian values. Their initial reaction to the war was measured support for a just war fought in defence of Belgium and the honour of the Empire to which they belonged. As the nature of the Empire's enemy became evident through the burning of Louvain, the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the use of poison gas at Ypres, Presbyterians sought to understand how a Christian country could commit such acts. Evidence of the influence of anti-Christian secularist and nationalist teachings in Germany was discussed as was the formal statement of the German churches on the origins of the war, a statement that suggested Christians in Germany had been misled about the origins of the conflict.

The news of the loss of so many Canadian soldiers at Second Ypres in April 1915 led to the first detailed discussions of the significance of death in the Christian tradition. The Christian belief that death is the door to eternal salvation, for those who believed in Christ and repented their sins, was a comfort to many readers dealing with the large loss of life. The Protestant emphasis on the resurrection, the belief that one's life should prepare a person for death and a more rewarding life with Christ liberated from sin, was a message of hope for many Presbyterian believers. Reconciliation with death faces every Christian at some point in their life; the war presented an opportunity to emphasize this aspect of the Christian faith. The Presbyterian Church also struggled with the problem of God's role in a war which seemed to have no end. The distinction was made between God being on the side of the Allies and the Allies believing they were on God's side.

Church leaders also emphasized that individual faith in God and salvation through Jesus Christ was not dependent on the results of the war.

As the secular press began to debate the merits of an early peace, the denominational press followed suit. Consistently in December 1916 and throughout 1917 the Presbyterian editors and authors defended their opposition to a premature peace by re-emphasizing the reasons why Presbyterians went to war in the first place. The Presbyterian idea of the meaning of the war was also re-emphasized during the conscription debate. Towards the end of 1917 and into 1918, when the Military Service Act was implemented as a direct result of a victory for the Unionist government in December 1917, the idea that the war was being fought for Christian values was reinforced. With the rise of conscientious objectors, mostly on religious grounds, the Presbyterian press emphasized that going to war for a just cause was acceptable within the teachings of Christianity. The debate on conscription also led to renewed discussion of the responsibility of the individual and the importance of decisions on faith made by individual Christians. Ultimately what was in one's heart would be the basis of God's judgment.

As the war continued on well into 1918, the Presbyterian papers focused on the growing problem of war-weariness. The temptation to give in to demands for a premature peace was countered by reminders that the war was righteous and was fought against evil on behalf of Christian values. Throughout the last phase of the war, Presbyterians were consistently told that eternal salvation came to those who were faithful. For believers, the losses were softened by a firm belief that their loved ones, if they had been faithful to Christ, were in a better place.

The coming of peace saw the Presbyterian denominational press reflect on the war and engage in a debate over the terms of a future peace. The majority of Presbyterian contributors reiterated their belief in the righteousness of the cause using the achievement of victory to demonstrate that, as hoped, the Allies were on the side of right.

The end of the war raised faith-based questions about death, why some died, why some did not and why some boys were lost so close to the end. The concept of death brought to believers through Christ and his Apostles was reinforced. The messages were comforting and hopeful, for Presbyterian leaders understood the difficulties in overcoming the notion that these men would never know the brilliant and happy futures that victory would bring. Yet, the Presbyterian press described death as understood through Christ as full of life and happy fellowship.

In addition to bringing messages of comfort and hope, the Presbyterian papers were also cautionary in tone. The popularity of secularist teachings both in Germany and at home was thought to be indicative of anti-Christian behaviour. The war had taught Presbyterians the evils of putting the state above God. Missionary work was seen as a way to ensure peace and spread the belief in God as the supreme ruler. As a result new campaigns were launched in the Presbyterian papers after the war in an attempt to provide the world with Christian values including forgiveness, repentance and justice. The Presbyterian leaders strove to ensure that Canadians remembered that the reasons for going to war were legitimate and justice was served. In this vein the significance of a just and lasting peace was emphasized, and the notions and importance of individual sin and repentance as well as the need to punish the enemy and the degree of severity were debated.

Not only did the Presbyterian publications present their ideas in a forthright manner, they attempted to address many of the tests to their faith presented by the long and bloody nature of the war. The complexity of the views of the Presbyterian leaders, whether clergy or layman, were evident in the speeches, editorials and letters to the editor presented in the four denominational publications. While the *Record*, with its emphatic editor Dr. Ephraim Scott, stood firm on the Christian values and just reasons for going to war, other publications offered more open debate. The *Witness* remained fairly steadfast in its support for the war but did provide its readers with some varied opinion on the war and the possibility of peace. The *Presbyterian* presented the most open debate on the subjects of war and peace, militarism and pacifism, as well as the need for a national as well as an imperial outlook. The differing nature of the periodicals is evidence of the complex nature of church but also the intricate character of the Christian faith as practiced by Canadian Presbyterians. Any analysis that would suggest the Christian response to the war in Canada was a result of government propaganda, does not take into account evidence of German atrocities, which was all many Presbyterians needed in order to understand the evil nature of the enemy. Emphasis placed on the literal words of Christ to prove that war was “criminal and unchristian” fails to recognize the context of scripture as interpreted by many of the faithful.

The nature of Presbyterian theology was evident throughout the war through the emphasis on individual faith. No matter how wonderful the character of an individual soldier, unless that individual had faith in his heart there would not be everlasting life. The Presbyterians consistently emphasized the importance of individual faith to the extent that it was clear that even enemy soldiers would achieve eternal life if they had

faith and good intent in their hearts. Presbyterians understood that fighting a Christian enemy was not necessarily a fight against individual Germans who might indeed be true to God, but rather against German militarism and the Prussian leadership who represented evil. Presbyterians did not have to struggle with the paradox of fighting for peace for they understood that war was the only means to obtain peace consistent with Christian principles when evil threatened their world. War was not the most heinous thing in their Christian universe for there were times and instances where “war was never wrong when it was against wrong.” Truth and honour were more important than peace.

The view expressed by Bliss and other historians that the churches were wrong to support the state is rooted in the conviction that patriotic fervor engulfed the churches and their congregations. The evidence in this thesis has clearly demonstrated that the leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Canada were relatively free of patriotic zeal. They supported the war because it was just so there was no conflict between their patriotism and morality. Pacifist and just war traditions are both accepted within Christianity; extreme passion one way or another is not. One could find instances where patriotic fervor seeped into the editorials and sermons of Presbyterians but it was not blind patriotic fervor that led the majority of Presbyterians to reject Christian pacifism in support of the Great War. Rather it was their consistent belief in the righteousness and justness of the cause. The periodicals reveal that patriotic sentiment was usually measured and analyzed intellectually. Presbyterians were cautioned to be mindful of becoming fanatical one way or another and forgetting their basic faith relationship with God.

Suggestions that a pacifist view especially towards a war against evil and on behalf of Christian values, was “more Christian” fails to recognize that fighting for liberty and righteousness is completely compatible with Christianity. In fact many Presbyterian leaders clearly believed that what was not sensible was the belief that war was the worst thing that could happen. For Presbyterians submission by a modern-day democracy to a militaristic despot was a far greater error. C.S. Lewis emphasizes this point when he suggests, “The question is whether war is the greatest evil in the world, so that any state of affairs which might result from submission is certainly preferable.”²⁷⁵ Many Great War Presbyterians believed that a Europe dominated by an autocratic and militaristic despot was more evil than war itself.

An analysis of many Presbyterian editorials, articles and letters to the editor, taken from a variety of periodicals throughout the various stages of the war, shows that Presbyterians had a clear idea of the causes and purposes of the war and believed that the war did not contradict their faith. The war was a catalyst for re-examining their faith and returning to the fundamentals of Christianity. The war was fought on behalf of Christian values in defence of liberty, the weak and Christianity itself. The nature of both the enemy and the conflict was obvious. The repeated discussion of death in the Christian context as well as the analysis of the threat posed by the Prussian military caste to Christianity reveal that Presbyterians had a clear understanding of why the war was being fought and its consequences.

Most of the Presbyterian discourse was about understanding the war within the framework of Christian principles. The Presbyterians tackled tough faith issues and were

²⁷⁵ C.S. Lewis, *Compelling Reason*, 9.

able to reconcile the war and their faith in a way which was compatible with deeply held Christian beliefs. The more secularized views of today should not colour our understanding of the faith of our forefathers. There is room for both the pacifist and just war tradition within Christianity, as indeed there was within the confessional structure of the Presbyterian Church. The suggestion that pacifism is the only true Christian position, and that support for war – as in the case of the majority of Presbyterian church members between 1914 and 1918 – compromises Christian ideals, ignores fundamental tenets of Christianity. It assumes that war is so morally reprehensible in any and all circumstances that any alternative is preferable. It also assumes that Christians are indeed so worldly that they consider death the ultimate tragedy.

Presbyterian churches across Canada are filled with bronze memorial plaques, rolls of honour and stained glass windows commemorating the members of their respective congregations who gave their lives in the Great War. These memorials are precious, admired and integral parts of the church and its history, and reflect an understanding and belief in the Christian values for which the war was waged. Today, many Presbyterians regard these memorials as symbols of futility and waste. In fact some would even suggest that these symbols only romanticize and disguise the true horror of war. But this is a presentist perspective and the evidence in this paper would propose otherwise. Presbyterians who erected these commemorations were only following the next logical steps in their deeply felt belief in the causes of the war. Presbyterian men who fought for the defence of the weak, for liberty and righteousness, against the evils of German militarism, in the defence of Christianity, deserved recognition.

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Churchmen Pro and Con

1914.

In order to make known to the Christian world their attitude in the war, a number of German theologians, pastors, and missionary leaders sent out a letter addressed to evangelical Christians abroad. When the letter was received in Great Britain, a representative group of Established and Nonconformist Churchmen, issued a manifesto in reply. British papers containing the latter document reached Canada last week. Believing that our readers will be interested in seeing what the Germans have to say for themselves, as well as the rejoinders of the British leaders, we print both documents.

THE GERMAN POSITION

THE German letter begins with a declaration that a systematic network of lies "is endeavoring in other lands to cast upon our people and its government the guilt of the outbreak of the war, and has dared to dispute the inner right of us and our Emperor to invoke the assistance of God." It then proceeds:

"For forty-three years our people has maintained peace. Wherever a danger of war arose in other lands, our nation has exerted herself to assist in removing or diminishing it. Her ideal was peaceful work. She has contributed a worthy share to the cultural wealth of the modern world. She has not dreamed of depriving others of light and air. She desired to thrust no one from his place. In friendly competition with other peoples, she has developed the gifts which God had given her. Her industry brought her rich fruit. She won also a modest share in the task of colonization in the primitive world, and was exerting herself to offer her contribution to the remolding of Eastern Asia. She has left no one, who is willing to see the truth, in doubt as to her peaceful disposition. Only under the compulsion to repel a wanton attack has she now drawn the sword.

As our government was exerting itself to localize the justifiable vengeance for an abominable royal murder, and to avoid the outbreak of war between two neighboring great powers, one of them, whilst invoking the mediation of our Emperor, proceeded (in spite of its pledged word) to threaten our frontiers, and compelled us to protect our land from being ravaged by Asiatic barbarism. Then our adversaries were joined also by those who by blood and history and faith are our brothers, with whom we felt ourselves in the common world-task more closely bound than with almost any other nation. Over against a world in arms we recognize clearly that we have to defend our existence, our individuality, our culture and our honor. No scruple holds back our enemies, where in their opinion there is a prospect, through our destruction, of seizing for themselves an economic advantage or an increase of power, a fragment of our motherland, our colonial possessions or our trade. We stand over against this raging of the peoples fearless because of our trust in the holy and righteous God. Precisely because this war has been wantonly thrust upon our people, it finds us a single people, in which distinctions of race and rank, of parties and confessions, have vanished. In a holy enthusiasm, not shrinking from battle and from death, and looking to God, we are all of one mind and prepared joyfully to stake our all for our land and our liberty."

The letter then accuses the foes of Germany of having committed against Germans living peaceably abroad "unnameable horrors" and of having carried the war unscrupulously in the centre of Africa, thus trampling in the ruin flourishing mission fields. It continues as follows:

"Our Christian friends abroad know how joyfully we German Christians greeted the fellowship in faith and service which the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference left as a sacred legacy to Protestant Christendom; they know also how we have, to the best of our ability, co-operated in order that among the Christian nations, with their competing political and economic interests, there should arise a Chris-

tianity united and joyous in the recognition of the task intrusted to it by God. It was also to us a matter of conscience to remove by every means political misunderstandings and ill-feeling and to assist in bringing about friendly relations between the nations. We have now to endure the taunt that we have believed in the power of the Christian faith to conquer the wickedness of those who are seeking war, and we encounter the reproach that our efforts for peace have only served to conceal from our people the true attitude of their enemies. Nevertheless we do not regret that we have thus endeavored to promote peace. Our people could not enter into this struggle with so clear a conscience if leading men of its ecclesiastical, scientific and commercial life had not in such manifold ways exerted themselves to make this fratricidal strife impossible."

We were hoping that through God there should arise from the responsibility of the hour a stream of new life for the Christian peoples. Already we were able to trace in our German churches the powerful effects of this blessing and the fellowship with the Christians of other lands in obedience to the universal commission of Jesus was to us a service of sacred joy.

If this fellowship is now irreparably destroyed; if the peoples among whom missions and brotherly love had begun to be a power lapse into savagery, in murderous war through hate and bitterness; if a simply incurable rent has been made in Teutonic Protestantism; if Christian Europe forfeits a notable portion of her position in the world; if the sacred springs from which her peoples should derive their own life and should offer it to others are corrupted and choked; the guilt of this rests, this we hereby declare before our Christian brethren of other lands with calm certainty, not on our people. We know full well that through this sanguinary judgment God is also calling our nation to repentance, and we rejoice that she is hearing His holy voice and turning to Him. But in this we know that we are at one with all the Christians among our people, that we can and must repudiate on their behalf and on behalf of their government the responsibility for the terrible crime of this war and all its consequences for the development of the Kingdom of God on earth. With the deepest conviction we must attribute it to those who have long secretly and cunningly been spinning a web of conspiracy against Germany, which now they have flung over us in order to strangle us therein.

We direct our appeal to the conscience of our Christian brethren in other lands, and press upon them the question, what God now requires of them, and what can and must take place, in order that through blindness and unscrupulousness in God's great hour of the missionary enterprise, Christendom shall not be robbed of its power and of its right to serve as His messenger to non-Christian humanity."

This letter is signed by about twenty prominent men, including Professors Bücken, Harnack, Loofs, Richter, Wundt, and Drs. Schreiber and Schinckel.

THE BRITISH REPLY

A document has obtained circulation in England, and, we believe, in America, in the form of an appeal with reference to the European War, addressed to "the Evangelical Christians Abroad," and making special reference to the members of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. It is signed by brothers and friends of our own in the Church of Christ—men of whose honesty, capacity, and good

faith there can be no conceivable question, and whose names carry weight throughout the world among those who think and teach and pray.

It fills us with amazement that those who occupy the positions held by the signatories of this appeal should commit themselves to a statement of the political causes of the war, which departs so strangely from what seem to us to be the plain facts of this grave hour in European history. They offer in brief words some account of the events of recent months or years, but to the most salient of the facts out of which the war has arisen they make no reference at all.

It has not been a light thing for us to give our assent to the action of the Government of our country in this matter. But the facts of the case as we know them have made it impossible for us to do otherwise. Of these facts we offer here a brief but a careful summary derived from the official papers, the accuracy of which cannot be challenged. It is upon these facts that we rest our assured conviction that, for men who desire to maintain the paramount obligation of fidelity to plighted word, and the duty of defending weaker nations against violence and wrong, no possible course was open but that which our country has taken.

The Course of Negotiations

On July 24 Sir Edward Grey said to the German Ambassador that "if the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia did not lead to trouble between Austria and Russia," he "had no concern with it." He proposed that "the four Powers, Germany, Italy, France and ourselves, should work together simultaneously at Vienna and St. Petersburg in favor of moderation in the event of the relations between Austria and Russia becoming threatening." [Correspondence respecting the European Crisis, White Book, Cd. 7467, No. 11.] The German Secretary of State said (July 25) that he was quite ready to fall in with this suggestion [No. 18].

When the Servian reply was rejected by Austria, Sir E. Grey proposed (July 26) that the French, Italian and German Ambassadors should meet him at once "for the purpose of discovering an issue which would prevent complications" [No. 36]. The responsibility for the failure of this proposal rests solely with Germany, who alone raised objections. While favorable "in principle" to mediation between Russia and Austria, the German Government could not approve the particular method of conference suggested, but, though invited to do so, they put forward no alternative proposal.

Finally, at the very last moment, Sir E. Grey made a new effort for the maintenance of peace: "I said to the German Ambassador this morning (July 31) that if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were trying to preserve European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St. Petersburg and Paris; and go to the length of saying that if Russia and France would not accept it His Majesty's Government would have nothing more to do with the consequences; but, otherwise, I told the German Ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in." [No. 111].

Nothing could more plainly show that our Government endeavored to the utmost to maintain the peace of Europe, and that it did not receive the co-operation of the German Government in its endeavor.

The Neutrality of Belgium

The actual interposition of Britain in the present war arose directly out of the question of the neutrality of Belgium.

The original guarantee of the neutrality of Belgium is to be found in Article VII. of the Treaty of London (April 19, 1839) between England, Austria, France, Russia, and Prussia on the one hand and the Netherlands on the other.

The Article reads: "Belgium shall form a State independent and perpetually neutral. It is under obligation to observe such neutrality towards all other States." On the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, identical treaties between England and France, and between England and Prussia acting for herself and her Allies, were signed in London. The Treaties were in each case preceded by a formal Declaration on the part of the belligerent Powers that they would respect the neutrality of Belgium.

The Prussian Note expressly stated that the Prussian Government regarded such a Declaration as superfluous in view of the existing Treaties. The Treaties of 1870, moreover, specifically recognized as of binding force Article VII. of the Treaty of 1839. The Treaties provide that in the case of one belligerent respecting and the other violating the neutrality of Belgium, the United Kingdom will co-operate with the belligerent respecting neutrality against the other.

The third Article of the Treaties provides that it shall be binding on the contracting parties during the continuance of the war and for twelve months after; "and on the expiration of that time the independence and neutrality of Belgium, will, so far as the high contracting parties are respectively concerned, continue to rest as heretofore on the Quintuple Treaty of 1839."

The obligation thus rested on Germany, no less than on England and France, to respect, in accordance with the treaties which she had signed, the neutrality of Belgium. In reply to an inquiry addressed by the British to the French and German Governments, on July 31, when the outbreak of hostilities appeared imminent, France gave an assurance that she would respect the neutrality of Belgium. Germany gave no such assurance, our Ambassador gathering from what the Secretary of State said, "that he thought any reply they might give could not but disclose a certain amount of their plan of campaign in the event of war ensuing" [No. 122]. On August 3 an ultimatum was addressed to Belgium by the German Government, the effect of which was that Belgium would be treated as an enemy unless she assented to the violation of her territory by permitting the passage of German troops to France [No. 153]. This the Belgian Government categorically refused as a flagrant violation of the Law of Nations—a view of the action of Germany which is supported by the speech of the Chancellor to the Reichstag on August 4; for, after speaking of "the just protest" of Belgium, he added: "The wrong—I speak openly—that we are committing we will endeavor to make good as soon as our military goal has been reached."

German publications, official and unofficial, have, since the actual violation, stated that Belgian territory was only violated after the Belgians had agreed to allow the French to march through, and had thereby "broken the neutrality." These statements are advanced without any attempt to support them by evidence; they are in contradiction to the substantial pleas put forward by Germany at the time, and they directly conflict with the pledge given by France to Sir E. Grey; they are wholly baseless and untrue.

It is right that at this point we should refer to "the strong bid for British neutrality" reported by the British Ambassador at Berlin as having been made to him by the Imperial Chancellor on July 29 [No. 85]. In replying to it on the next day Sir E. Grey wrote as follows:—"His Majesty's Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms. What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken and France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies. From

the material point of view such a proposal is unacceptable; for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy. Altogether, apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover. The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligations or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain either" [No. 10].

What the Facts Imply

The facts thus recited are in our belief incontestable. We can only suppose, incredible as it seems, that those honorable and gifted men who signed the German Appeal were unaware of the obligations by which we were bound, and also of the story of the negotiations. A violation of such promises on our part would have been an act of basest perfidy.

When we turn to the generalities which the document contains about German thought and policy and plans, we seek in vain for any reference to the teaching of such writers as Treitschke and Bernhardi.

Does it mean that those who have signed the German Appeal regard those leaders and teachers as negligible, or that their own opposition to what those widely read books contain is so well known as to need no assertion? We cannot tell. But the facts of the hour, as set forth in the summary which we have given above, correspond so clearly with what is inculcated and driven home in those writings that we at least find it impossible to separate the one from the other.

Again, we cannot pass in silence the statement of the manifesto that "unnamed horrors have been committed against Germans living peaceably abroad." We do not know to what the signatories refer in this general statement; but we may be permitted to speak of what is within our personal knowledge. Peaceful and well-disposed Germans in this country are being treated with all possible consideration and kindness, and the Home Secretary has taken them under his own protection.

God knows what it means to us to be separated for a time by this great war from many with whom it has been our privilege—with whom we hope it will be our privilege again—to work for the setting forward of the Christian message among men. We unite whole-heartedly with our German brethren in deploring the disastrous consequences of the war, and in particular its effect in diverting the energies and resources of the Christian nations from the great constructive tasks to which they were providentially called on behalf of the peoples of Asia and Africa.

But there must be no mistake about our own position. Eagerly desirous of peace, foremost to the best of our power in furthering it, keen especially to promote the close fellowship of Germany and England, we have nevertheless been driven to declare that, dear to us as peace is, the principles of truth and honor are yet more dear.

To have acted otherwise than we have acted would have meant deliberate unfaithfulness to an engagement by which we had solemnly bound ourselves, and a refusal of our responsibilities and duties in regard to the maintenance of the public law of Europe. We have taken our stand for international good faith, for the safeguarding of smaller nationalities, and for the upholding of the essential conditions of brotherhood among the nations of the world.

Signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Archbishop of Armagh, R. J. Campbell, John Clifford, D.D., P. T. Forsyth, D.D., F. B. Meyer, D.D., George Adam Smith, D.D., Alexander Whyte, D.D., and thirty-three other leaders in the churches of Britain.

Presbyterians and World Peace

THE Presbytery of Westminster has taken the first step toward enlisting the active support of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for the cause of world peace. On the motion of Rev. John MacKay, D.D., Principal of Westminster Hall, the Presbytery adopted unanimously the following resolution and caused copies to be transmitted to Premier Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and also to the other Presbyteries of the Church throughout Canada:—

Peace Manifesto

Whereas the Parliament of Canada is soon to decide its attitude to naval armaments; and,

Whereas there is a growing opinion among thinking men that war between civilized peoples is a relic of barbarism, as absurdly out of place in the twentieth century as it is wasteful and wicked; and,

Whereas the loss of life and physical suffering entailed by war falls largely upon the producing classes, and the resulting sorrow and bitter struggle for existence upon their wives and helpless children; and,

Whereas the immediate duty of civilized nations is to right the wrongs of the vast numbers within their own borders who are handicapped by poverty and harsh economic conditions; and,

Whereas the immense sums now being spent on armaments would vastly lessen the poverty of the civilized world; and,

Whereas the development of the United States has been made possible by drawing upon the populations of all sections of Europe, and the development of Canada depends upon her ability to draw largely upon the same sources; and,

Whereas because of the complete interdependence of the world's financial and commercial centres, a great European war would produce practical industrial paralysis in the United States and Canada with its attendant frightful loss and suffering;

Therefore, we believe that the time has come in the history of Christian civilization when a serious inquiry should be made by the nations of the world as to the necessity of war. In order to secure this inquiry we suggest the following procedure to the Parliament of Canada now in session:—

(1.) That both parties unite in a declaration which will make it quite clear to all the world that while Great Britain should exhaust every possibility in order to avoid the awful catastrophe of a European war, yet should such a war result, Canada is ready to stand or fall with the Empire.

(2.) That the Parliament of Canada should approach the President and Congress of the United States, looking toward joint action in making overtures to the European nations, to call at once a council of their representatives to consider afresh their international relations. This council should proceed with an exhaustive investigation of the causes of the present situation, and should honestly and earnestly seek to find some method of adjusting international differences more in harmony with the spirit of modern civilization, and recognizing the fact that the ties that bind all peoples into one world family are now so many and so intricate that no two nations can even prepare for war without seriously affecting all others. The refusal of any European nation to enter such a conference, being an unfriendly act, may be followed by economic penalties, such as the surtax on its commerce with the United States and Canada.

(3.) That it be arranged by the United States and Canada that as soon as an understanding has been arrived at between European powers, they will call a council representing the world's powers to establish a permanent court for the settlement of international disputes by reason and righteousness, and not by blind passion and brute force.

The War and The Christian Church

Issued by the Assembly's Commission on the War

A Commission was appointed by the Assembly to make a special study of the situation created by the war and to offer to the ministers and people of the Presbyterian Church in Canada such reflections and suggestions as may seem to be significant and helpful in a time of severe testing and trial for the Nation and for the Christian Church.

The Members of the Commission, in writing the paragraphs which follow, do so with a keen sense of their inability to interpret adequately the appalling catastrophe which has come upon the human race. They profoundly believe, however, that God is present in all history, both in judgment and in mercy; and they desire humbly to wait upon Him and to catch some of His meaning as He speaks to the world and to His Church in the terrors and agonies of this tremendous conflict.

I.—AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY

In the first place, we believe that the war has created for the Church an **unparalleled opportunity** for her special ministry of comfort and of hope. It has done so in at least three ways:

(1) It has deepened in the hearts of multitudes the **sense of need of Divine help and strength**. There is sorrow in innumerable homes. A heavy load of anxiety rests on multitudes. The strain of the war is felt by thousands, and in many cases the war works pain and anguish beyond anything that is endured on the battle-field. For such a need there is no help or healing save in God.

(2) It has exhibited the **hollowness of a merely conventional religion**, the vanity of empty forms and the futility of phrases, however pious, which are not the expression of a real experience of God's saving power. It has demanded in thunderous tones, reality in religion on the part of all who make a profession of the Christian faith.

(3) It has called for, and it has produced, **moral qualities of the highest value**. The valor of our soldiers has been proved on a hundred blood-stained fields. The stories of individual heroism thrill the blood and awaken a just pride, and will form a splendid inspiration for generations yet unborn. In the homes whence the

Errata

Page 4, ninth line from top—For **remake** read **rebuke**.

Page 4, sixteenth line from foot—Omit **and**.

Page 6, fourteenth line from foot—For the first **and** read **all**.

Page 7, nineteenth line from foot—For **German** read **human**.

Page 8, third line from foot—For **conversion** read **conviction**.

Page 10, fourteenth line from top—For **He** read **be**.

Page 11, twentieth line from top—For **treading** read **trenching**.

Page 12, fourth line from foot—For **propædantic** read **propædeutic**.

Page 13, third line from top—For **wobsters** read **wabsters**.

soldiers have come, and in the communities where they were reared, the spirit of sacrifice has been awakened and has uttered itself in patient toil and manifold self-denial. The affinity between such virtue and the deepest things in the Christian faith is manifest, and the need of faith to animate and sustain and consecrate such splendid devotion is still more evident.

The opportunity is given us. Shall we, who hold the faith of Christ, not use it. We have the comfort to administer, the reality with which to make all mockeries, the love wherewith to crown the highest human attainments. We are confronted by infinite need. We are called to be channels of all-sufficient grace and victorious power, and undying hope.

II—A CHALLENGE AND A CRITICISM

In the second place, we regard the War as a challenge to, and a criticism of, the Christian Church.

(1) The faith of the Church is **challenged**. The untold agonies of millions, not merely of soldiers, but of those innocent ones whom the war has overwhelmed in its ruthless course, constitute a dark problem for faith. How can we reconcile these things with the justice and goodness of God? Faith is strained to the breaking point. In more cases than we know it has given way, even among those who have been numbered among devout and believing people. On the part of those who have had only a nominal faith, there has been shipwreck of their formal orthodoxy; while unbelief has regarded itself as altogether justified by a tragedy, which makes impossible either the omnipotence or the love of God, and, in either case, man discredits forever the Christian belief.

(2) The Church is condemned for **moral feebleness**. It failed to make this war impossible. The nations engaged in this bitter conflict are nominally Christian. Churches, both established and non-established, have been at work in them for centuries, embracing all classes in a network of Christian agencies. Yet this ghastly thing has happened, which the Church of Christ ought to have prevented and might have prevented. The causes of the Church's failure defy complete analysis. In three directions, however, the failure has been most conspicuous:

(a) In the lives of professed Christians. It is vain to plead our orthodoxy, our liberality, our enterprises. The value of these things has been largely discounted by our failure to represent Christ, in character and daily life. The power of the Church, as a witness in the world, is sapped by the unchristlikeness of Christians.

(b) In the Christian pulpit. The contrasted faults of intellectualism, emotionalism, legalism, have rendered ineffective much preaching that was able and well intentioned. Many sermons have failed because they were shallow, commonplace and irrelevant to the real needs and problems of the people. The conduct of public worship has been too often slovenly and irrelevant; or, if formally correct, has been cold and lifeless. The whole tone and atmosphere of our congregational gatherings has often been artificial. The note of reality has been lacking. The ban of a bourgeois respectability has been over us. Religion has become middle class and comfortable. Working men are uninterested, and even repelled. Suspicion is engendered; and the Church becomes involved in the rivalry of "Class" versus "Mass."

(c) In methods of Christian Work there is too much machinery and too little output. There has not been a thorough-going diagnosis of the moral hurt of mankind. Palliatives and remedies have been applied; and the heart of the disease has not been reached. There has not been a clear perception of the end in view; and so the work has been narrow and sectional. Large departments of life have lain apart from the Church and have not been affected by its testimony. At both ends of the social scale great portions of the community are practically outside the Church, have no allegiance to it, and are not reached by its influence. Details in the criticism may be rebutted, but the charge as a whole is too true. The Church of the period preceding the war had not the power it was meant to have, the power promised to it, the power without which its immense machinery lies inert and useless.

Such challenge and criticism cannot be passed over. They call for closest, most humble consideration. How shall we meet them? They form not merely problems for ministers to discuss in theological societies. They are burdens on the consciences of all members of the Christian Church.

III.—THE WAR IS THE CONSEQUENCE, THE EXPOSURE AND THE JUDGMENT OF SIN

In the third place, we look upon the war, with its manifold losses and indescribable sorrows, as the consequence, the exposure and the judgment of human sin. It has been called "the apocalypse of sin." In it is made hideously obvious sin's power to degrade and corrupt and destroy the whole moral nature. In it is rendered manifest man's solidarity in sin, communities and nations being involved in its moral contagion and its enslaving dominion. The strongest utterances of an older type of preaching are not too

The period of the war is not the time for theological controversy. The business of the Church in war time is, first and foremost, Evangelism. In this war-time Evangelism we note certain aspects and qualities as being indispensable, the heart and centre of the Gospel. The Kingdom of God has been assailed in its very foundation. The sin of man, if it were unjudged and unbroken, would be the destruction of the Divine Supremacy. God Himself has met this attack by the action of His own Holy Love. By the Cross of Christ, sin has been judged once for all; and its power in the moral world has been broken for ever more. The Victory of dying, and undying Love confronts the Tragedy of human sin.

The Cross is the price of the redemption of man. It is the warrant of Love's Supremacy. It is God's answer to man's rebellion. Evangelism, therefore, must centre in the Cross. Any other Gospel is no Gospel, a mere imagination of man, vapid, flaccid, useless. A God, who would not deliver up His own Son, who would not lay upon Himself the load of human sin, who would not or could not undergo the unknown agony of the Cross, would be powerless to save the world. We cannot quench the flame which is devouring civilization by a douch of rose-water. There are no "pills for earthquakes." The rough, blood-stained Cross must be reared in the heart and set up in street and market and lifted in the pulpit. "The preaching of the Cross is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). If this note of the Cross has been lacking from the Church's witness, no wonder we have been haunted with the feebleness which all the world has seen and condemned. We must recapture the experience, if we are to proclaim the Gospel of redeeming love. All of us have been "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Ministers have been made overseers over the flock, "to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

(1) Here, then, is the first charge upon us—to pass on to others the Gospel we have received, by which we have been saved, "that Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). If any man has been remiss in this duty, doubting, perhaps, the effectiveness of such an announcement, let him return to the primitive simplicity of the Gospel, let him exercise anew the ministry of reconciliation to wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; let him become an ambassador for Christ, let him beseech men to be reconciled to God, giving this as the warrant of his ~~conviction~~ conviction as well as the ground of his gospel, that God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the right-

eousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:18, 21). So doing, he will be a co-worker with God (2 Cor. 6:1). The power of God will be with him; and his ministry will be sealed by Divine approval.

(2) The scope and contents of the Christian Salvation. These are infinite and inexhaustible. The longest ministry will not suffice to unfold all "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Yet the briefest pastorate must present the verities of Christian experience, in such proportion and balance, and with such proper emphasis, that no essential element of the Christian salvation shall be neglected or relegated to a secondary place. It may be that in time past matters have been insisted on as essential which were not really so, while some, that were indeed vital, have received insufficient treatment. The War is sifting our essentials and non-essentials. It is summoning all Christians to discern, and hold, the deep things of God. And it is commanding all who undertake the ministry of the Word, to proclaim a full Gospel with entire faithfulness and absolute fearlessness. Nothing is to be omitted which is required to meet the need of man. Nothing is to be present which is merely of secondary value and may be left to the shifting phases of the individual judgment.

The minds of men are not to be distracted by debates as to the technicalities of dogma. The situation demands the proclamation of the facts of Salvation, as these are set forth in the Word of God, are sincerely grounded in God's redeeming deeds, and are countersigned by the dealing of the Divine Spirit in the experience of believers in every age. The details must be studied by every Christian, and very specially by every preacher of the Gospel, with diligent investigation of the truth of God, with an open mind to every revelation of His will, and not without prayer, reverent submission and adoring worship. We believe, however, that the War requires the Church to utter anew its conviction, with peculiar emphasis, regarding the following elements in its faith.

(a) The Being and character of God, as revealed in Christ. We dare not fall back on so-called "natural religion," and teach a theism which professes to be independent of Christ. "We believe in God through Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Saviour and Lord." In these words Dr. Denney summed up the Christian faith in God, as certified and interpreted through Jesus. The God in whom we believe, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and has reconciled the world to Himself. In the long ages of man's history He has been leading men to the acknowledgment of His Sovereignty, the Sovereignty of Holy Love. Their

conviction

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sins and miseries, their guilt and sufferings, have been laid upon His heart in a sorrow, for which the human imagination provides no parallel. But this sin-Bearer is also the Judge of all the earth. He will not permit the travail of His soul to be deprived of its fruit. In the way of His Judgments, we wait for Him (Is. 26 : 8). The God, who is like Christ, the God who came into the world in Christ, will not allow Satan, or Kaiser, to overthrow His Kingdom. We lift up our hearts in His name. We claim Him as the partner in our afflictions (Is. 63 : 9). We are absolutely confident in His victory, and in victory those who in faith make themselves the instruments of His saving purpose will have their assured part.

(b) The place of Jesus Christ, the crucified Redeemer, the living and exalted Lord in the salvation of men. Whether that salvation ~~is~~ conceived negatively as deliverance from sin, or positively as the consummation of all good, its sole author and agent is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, and the Son of Man, who through death, has entered upon absolute supremacy in the moral world, and now needs mankind as the living Divine answer to all human need, and the perfecter of all that concerns human welfare. Without a Divine Redeemer, sin remains unatoned, undefeated ; all the human race is plunging through successive tragedies to find despair and ruin. The War has made this plain. In this matter of Salvation, for the individual, for society, for mankind, it is Christ, or no one. For our soul's sake, for the sake of every moral good, we turn to Christ, our Saviour, our Master, and commit ourselves anew to Him, and in Him find our God and Father. To a world that, in literal fact, is perishing, we preach Christ, who has paid the price of His blood for its redemption, and now claims it as His own, and undertakes to lead it out of bondage and darkness into the realm of God, where God's will is done, and men become the children of God, and reach the fulness of humanity, as it was designed for perfect service and perfect blessedness. If it be conceivable that any ministers of our church have slighted Christ in their preaching, surely their guilt is very great, and the whole church will suffer through such dishonor to its Head. It is our bounden duty and our high privilege, to own Him Lord, and proclaim the glory of the Redeemer, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom we are chief.

(c) The issues of Salvation in actual experience. Three great complaints have been made against evangelical religion as commonly preached, viz., that it is negative and not positive, that it is individualistic and not social, that it is occupied with another world and is neglectful of the present.

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We believe that these complaints have a measure of justification ; and are sure that the War has forever disqualified such a religion from obtaining the approval of the educated conscience of mankind. We do not, however, regard the contrasts mentioned as being absolute. Rather do they respectively indicate aspects of the Christian Salvation, which cannot be omitted from any adequate presentation of the Gospel.

1. Salvation is indeed deliverance from sin's guilt and power. But it is also the transformation of a nature which sin has marred, till it reproduce the likeness of Christ, who is at once the revelation of God, and the revelation and perfecter of humanity.

2. It is indeed intensely individual, and consists in a personal relation to God through faith in Christ. But it does not leave the individual in his isolation. It makes him a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, and it can be realized by him only as he accepts his calling, as the servant of God and of his fellowmen. His salvation is not a prize he can carry off and enjoy by himself. He stands committed to continue the career of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister ; and there is a sense, without must initiate his master, and give his life a ransom for many.

3. It does indeed concern the world to come, and irradiates the darkness of the grave with the hope of immortality. It speaks with due reserve of that other world, which sets this one right. But it assures us of the beatific Vision. It promises that we shall be like Christ and shall serve Him forever. It declares to us in the darkest hour, that Christ is King, that He must reign till He put down all His enemies, and that He is coming, the second time, to close the history of the present age, and to surrender the Kingdom to His Father.

But it does not belittle this present world, or treat our life in it as insignificant. It claims this world, which even under the shadow of sin, is still the Father's for Christ, as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. And it commissions and empowers the servants of Christ, to indicate His supremacy in every field of human life and action. Everything which stands between man and the fulness of his humanity, in body, mind, soul and spirit, is the enemy of God and is to be fought as such by every servant of God, till it be replaced by such conditions as shall further the realization of all that God meant man to be. Sin and disease, ignorance and poverty, stand out conspicuously as such enemies of God, and against them the Church must wage unending war. The battlefield is far extended and includes Parliament House, and Court

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teaching

of law, street and market, villa and slum. There can be no rest for the Church so long as any part of the territory of human life remains in the hands of the enemy.

* One of the deepest lessons of the War is this : that Salvation means Service, and that service in such a world as this, always means a cross, and it may be even the supreme sacrifice of life itself.

V.—THE CALL TO CONSECRATED SELF-SACRIFICING SERVICE

Lastly, we commend to all our brethren, in the membership, and in the ministry of our Church, the renewed study and the diligent pursuit, of all means and methods, whereby the cause of Christ may be furthered, and the world prepared for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In one sense there is but one instrument, and that is the Gospel itself ; and there is but one work—preaching Christ. But in the changing conditions of the world at large, and of special localities, there is need for originality and inventiveness in the use of means, and in their proper adjustment. No doubt, those who have seen the War at close quarters will have much to tell us, and new points of view to present ; and for such enlightenment and leadership we eagerly wait. Meantime, there are certain things, which we ought to do, with our utmost endeavor, and with every gift of the Spirit.

(1) We ought to be bearing our personal testimony, and to be seeking to win individuals to the obedience of the faith. We are all guilty of failure in this matter. We have trusted too much to machinery ; or, we have left the duty to some other more gifted persons. In reality, the duty of personal work is inescapable. Our brother is our charge ; and we must seek by every means open to us, to win him for Christ. Not till this is realized, as it has never yet been, can any forward movement in religion be sound and secure.

(2) Ministers and others intrusted with the duty of preaching, must devote themselves anew to this sacred task. "Homiletic" is not a subject finished and done with, in the examination hall. It is to be a life study. In point of fact, it can only be pursued in the actual work of the ministry. The utmost the College can do is mere propaedeutic. Ask thoughtful hearers what a sermon ought to be, if it is to be effective. They will embody in their answer such points as these—(a) It must be Biblical, and contain a sure word of God, gained through painstaking and devout study.

(b) It must be intelligible, not couched in phrases that have lost their meaning, or decorated with the jargon of the schools ; but uttered in such speech as "wives and ~~children~~" use, the mother tongue, which "common people" readily understand and gladly listen to. (c) It must come home directly to men's "business and bosoms." Irrelevant disquisitions only disgust. Men come with needs and sorrows, sins and problems, living interests of every day, concerns that affect their ordinary life, and (oftener than one might guess) with racking doubts and haunting fears. To these we must fit our discourse ; else our best eloquence will be wasted, and our ripest scholarship be but Dead Sea fruit. (4) It must be sincere. The unpardonable sin of the ministry is professionalism. Our sermons must be the verbal expression of the life we lead. Here is our commonest, our deepest guilt as ministers. That we should so live during week days that people don't believe what we say on Sundays. We cannot evade our responsibility in this matter. We must represent Christ in our character, if we are to preach Him from the pulpit. (c) It must be earnest. This does not mean emotional ; though emotions of the purest kind cannot but thro through the speaker's heart, and be evoked in the hearer's. But it does mean that no man can preach who is not moved by a twofold passion, a passion for God, and a passion for man. Such qualities as these make good preaching ; and they are within the reach of every preacher.

(3) There is room and need, in the special circumstances of the Church, for special evangelistic efforts. The forms which these will assume must be determined by local circumstances. We suggest the following : (a) A series of sermons, e.g., at evening services, which shall follow some predetermined line, and aim directly at conviction, repentance and faith. (b) A week or fortnight in which the people of the congregation shall be summoned, night by night, for humiliation and prayer, for waiting on God, and for hearing the direct and simple appeals of the Gospel. There is often no need for a professional evangelist, or for outside help of any kind. Let minister and people make this effort in the privacy and intimacy of mutual knowledge and trust. (c) The same type as the foregoing, extended however to include a group of congregations. The size of the group must be determined by ministers in conference or by Presbyteries. It may assume the form of what is sometimes called "campaign" evangelism, the aim being to reach and move a whole community. If (a) and (b) were diligently employed through a whole winter, (c) might follow by a natural impulse. Is it too much to hope that some such course

might be followed throughout our Churches this winter, and be succeeded by a wide and deep awakening of religious interest throughout our Church?

(4) There ought certainly to be careful preparation made in all our congregations for the tasks and trials which are surely awaiting us "after the war." The period of the war will certainly prove not to have been that of our greatest difficulty. The duties and problems of peace will prove severer than any we have known during the war. They will gather round such points as the following:

(a) The return of the soldiers. This indeed, is upon us already. We owe them our peace and safety and our life and homes. They have stood between us and evils worse than death. Our debt is great, and it must be paid. We owe them comfort in their bodily distress. We owe them help in their economic need. Above all, we owe them Christ and His salvation. It behooves us to see that not one soldier shall return to our shores without being met with the Church's aid, in every shape and form, which shall correspond to his needs of body and soul. This lays special tasks on cities and places where military hospitals exist; but more remote districts will have the same kind of work to do. Much personal work will be needed; and great sums of money will be required, making heavy demands upon self-denial.

(b) The tasks of reconstruction. The War has involved a great measure of economic and social dislocation. We cannot fail to enter upon difficult and even troublous times, while society adjusts itself to peace conditions. In these times, the Church, as the organized agency of the Kingdom of God, will be tested, even more severely than in the pre-war conditions. We ought now to be giving serious study to the economic, social, and political problems which in the peace, will be acute and urgent. This is the duty laid on all thoughtful persons. More particularly it is incumbent on all ministers, elders, teachers, Social Service workers, all, in short, who are called to leadership. That the slum shall be no more; that poverty shall cease to be; that labor shall have its due reward; that the natural wealth of Canada shall not be exploited in the interests of the few; that the aggregation of riches in the hands of a small group shall be made impossible; are among some of the ends determined by the Christian Law of Love. How are to be compassed is the question, not of theorists or demagogues, but of every disciple of Jesus. That no terms shall be made with social vice, or with public corruption; that government, municipal, provincial, and dominion, shall be administered right-

eously; that national, and not party, ends shall be dominant in politics; these are matters which do not lie apart from the Church and its message. They lie as a charge upon the conscience of every Christian; and their accomplishment is part of the business of every minister. The Church is of the people and for the people; and must include in its interest and endeavor every aspect of the people's life. Even their amusements must not be neglected. A merely negative attitude here is impossible. We must claim the field of recreation and sport for Christ, the King.

(c) The pressure of approaching dangers. The peace will threaten religion in two ways. First, there will be a tendency to reaction, from the denials and repressions of war, to a recoil of luxury and pleasure. Second, there will be a tendency to fall back into old habits of indifference to the claims of God; and neglect of His ordinances. We have need to strengthen every tried Christian institution. The sanctity of the Lord's Day and of marriage and the security of the home; the efficiency of the Sunday School; and of Christian education generally; the spirituality and power of the Church's worship; the ennobling of ecclesiastical relations; both denominational and interdenominational; the unifying of all religious effort throughout the land; these concern us, in this hour, that when the peace begins, we may not be caught unprepared.

In closing, we humbly and earnestly call upon all ministers and members to renew their covenant with God, and their engagement to be His. This is our best preparation for the trial that is coming upon us. Our supreme, our constant need, is the revival of the life of God in our hearts. The Peace is calling to us, first—to dedicate ourselves afresh, in a full consecration, to God and to His Christ; second, to wait upon Him in earnest and continuous and united prayer, that we may receive anew the promise of the Father, and enter more deeply into the secrets of the Christian salvation and be quickened as never hitherto, by the power of God's indwelling Spirit—finally, to take up our cross and follow Jesus, in the path of daily duty, and the exercise of ceaseless self-denial. The Cross of our redemption was once reared on Calvary. The Cross of Christian sacrifice spreads its arms over the field of war. A Peace, without a Cross, would be a worse Hell than the war itself. God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. (Gal. 6:14.)

Brethren, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit. Amen.